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Toward understanding perceived growth in practical wisdom

A retrospective examination of Class Afloat program alumni, 1985-2012

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Declaration

This is to certify that the work contained within has been composed by me and is entirely my own work. No part of this thesis has been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

Aaron Marshall

Abstract

This research examines the perceptions of program alumni from Class Afloat – a particular tall ship sailing study school – with a view for perceived personal and social development during the experience and since, through an Aristotelian virtue lens.

Set at the disciplinary intersection of Aristotelian virtue theory and experiential education, self-reporting through survey and interview are analyzed to understand how program alumni perceive the experience as catalyzing or accelerating personal growth (including self-determination, responsibility, *attentional flexibility*, discipline, courage, moderate self-awareness, perspective, and realistic optimism) and social growth (including friendship, care for the other, empathy, humility, and loyalty) in a deeper attempt to assess perceived growth in practical wisdom, or phronesis, the practice of which mediates over and is constituted by these personal and social virtues.

Program alumni are drawn from a large chronological range of cohorts (1985-2012) to best appreciate Aristotle's notion that a flourishing life (one with developed and active practical wisdom) must be measured across a full life. In the end, the data suggests participation was significant in paradigmatic ways, leading to personal and social growth which extends far beyond the experience itself, impacting participant value commitments, personal identity, and ability to make practical wise decisions.

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Introduction: Context & Rationale

Introduction

This dissertation seeks to understand how a particular residential, experiential learning context – a voyage aboard Class Afloat's tall ship sailing program – is perceived to have catalyzed personal and social growth akin to neo-Aristotelian notions of practical wisdom.

During my career – as a formal educator, school administrator, and now education director – I have been drawn to experiential learning approaches. As I began researching experiential pedagogical approaches, I had difficulty demarcating meaningful boundaries for the field. In an attempt to reconcile the breadth and depth of programs and activities laying claim to the label "experiential," I tried to identify themes unique to the field.

The most significant result of that research came in identifying the natural emergence of personal and social development within experiential learning contexts. Interestingly, the literature tends to argue that personal and social education ought to be emphasized – a line of thinking that increasingly prioritizes personal and social learning above hard skill development or environmental education (Allison & Beames, 2010; Allison & VonWald, 2011; Allison et al, 2011; Bessant, 2009; Brinkmann, 2007; Seaman, 2010; Seaman & Coppens, 2006).

Additionally, especially in the last decade, experiential learning literature increasingly points to Aristotle's notion of practical wisdom or reasoning (*phronesis*) as a way of characterizing the educational outcomes meant by personal and social education. During my MA Philosophy studies I was introduced to Aristotle's virtue theory, and I have been drawn to it ever since. Since the start of this PhD program, I have been able to link neo-Aristotelian notions of practical wisdom to personal and social learning in school based outdoor learning (Marshall & Thorburn, 2013; Thorburn & Marshall, 2014), and in

outdoor adventure settings regarding values (Allison, Thorburn, Telford, & Marshall, 2011) and evaluation (Thorburn & Marshall, 2011).

To that end, this dissertation explores links between Aristotelian virtue cultivation (especially practical wisdom) and experiential learning notions of personal and social education by exploring how program participants perceive their own personal and social development as having been shaped by their Class Afloat, residential tall ship sailing experience.

Context

Currently, the theoretical drive for an experiential approach that fosters personal and social development is under-supported by evidence that experiential pedagogy can and does achieve this goal. This appears to be true for at least two reasons. First, personal and social development remains a somewhat vague and varied notion. The literature does clearly identify personal and social education as something educators ought to cultivate, and experiential educators argue their pedagogy best catalyses this learning. However, what is meant by personal and social development continues to be philosophically underdeveloped – identified almost synonymously as practical wisdom, or practical reasoning (Allison et al, 2011; Allison & VonWald, 2011; Bessant, 2009; Carr, 2003; Seaman & Coppens, 2006; Stonehouse et al, 2009; Thorburn & Marshall, 2011).

Second, studies that have attempted to measure personal and social learning focus largely on immediate change – either during or just following a particular learning experience, expedition, or course (Scrutton & Beames, 2015, see Takano, 2010 for a helpful exception to this trend). In regards to sail training research, Manu Schijf (2014) identifies "long term effects" by citing retrospective studies taking place two months after the sailing experience, affirming that few studies offer truly long-range retrospective inquiry (p. 51). This is particularly ironic within experiential education

circles, where virtue language is being adopted, given Aristotle's insistence that the cultivation of practical wisdom is measured over a full life (1985, p. 12).

Furthermore, understanding past participant perceptions is of great interest to sail training program operators – something I discovered while presenting at the 2014 Annual Sail Training International Conference (Marshall, 2014). Presenting initial findings from this research project led to multiple conversations throughout the conference regarding the themes raised by respondents – interest beyond what I had anticipated, from an audience more concerned with understanding perceived outcomes for the sake of program design, marketing, and program funding.

For their part, neo-Aristotelians identify experience as the primary catalyst for virtue development – both moral and prudential – given the practice involved in virtue cultivation. In Aristotle's account practical wisdom is the intellectual virtue uniquely responsible for guiding a person's ability to be virtuous in particular circumstances. Experiences offer particular, situated opportunities to practice good deliberation and virtue. The result of thoughtful attention to experiences, and the practice of deliberation, tends to lead to good decisions and living well.

Likewise, experiential education literature notes that challenging students to practice reflecting and deliberating over meaningful choices helps them develop the cognitive skills necessary for practical wisdom (Allison & VonWald, 2011; Bessant, 2009; Brinkmann, 2007). As learners critically engage experiences, recognize available choices, and discern the "best" way forward, their processes of critical reflection, practical reasoning, evaluation and judgement improve. Both experiential education literature and Aristotle argue that personal and social growth occurs when learners have opportunities to practice making reflective and discerning and often value laden choices (Allison et al, 2011; Carr, 2006; Pring, 2000). Thus, identifying personal and social growth as a central aim of experiential education captures the value of experience in both a Deweyian and neo-Aristotelian sense.

Rationale

Within this context, this dissertation aims to clarify what is meant by practical wisdom as parallel to personal and social growth, and use that understanding as a framework to make sense of participant perceptions regarding personal and social growth during their Class Afloat experience.

If the claims of experiential education literature are correct, then personal and social growth is a central (even emergent) feature of experiential learning environments. One could expect that participants in an experientially driven residential semester program would experience lasting personal and social education – that they would experience on-going growth in practical wisdom.

This research is timely given the current trend among experiential educators to borrow Aristotelian language when describing the personal and social education they image for learners.

Additionally, the retrospective nature of the study (across 27 years of participation) fills gaps in the literature by offering truly long term reflections. This study aims to test the expectation that participants in Class Afloat ought to experience on-going growth in practical wisdom, by exploring how Class Afloat program alumni across 27 cohorts (from 1985-2012) perceive their voyage and its role in shaping their personal identity, value commitments, and practice of virtue – particularly in light of program alumni's larger life-stories.

Through understanding participant life-stories, the study aims to understand the significance of residential programs in participants' lives and the role these programs can have as catalysts for practical wisdom. The research endeavours to identify perceived outcomes and link them to programmatic elements – clarifying *how* the program is perceived to have catalysed or cultivated growth. Perhaps gaining understanding in this particular study will offer educators new avenues for program design, pedagogical practice, and experience development. Additionally, it may offer

insight into the perceived value of participation in experiential residential programming by participants – in view of both short and long term perspectives.

Both areas of understanding shed light on current trends within experiential education scholarship and practice: increased attention given to personal and social development within experiential education and a desire to cultivate something very like Aristotelian practical wisdom through attention to personal and social development (Allison & Wurdinger, 2005; Allison et al, 2011; Arnold, 1999, 2001; Bessant, 2009; Brinkmann, 2007; Carr, 2006; Kristjánsson, 2007; Seaman & Coppens, 2006; Stonehouse et al, 2009).

Roadmap

In *Part 1: Foundations*, this thesis explores relevant literature to establish a framework for chosen methodology and an introduction of specific research questions. In this way, Part 1 provides discipline specific context for the research questions and suggests a rationale for the chosen methodology.

Chapter 1 surveys experiential learning literature with the aim of demarcating and characterizing the field. The chapter explores identifies several re-characterizations – of learning and the learner, of the educator and learner relationship, and of the overriding emphasis on social and personal education – consistent across experiential learning literature.

Chapter 2 traces Aristotelian virtue theory with a focus on the idea of practical wisdom (*phronesis*). This chapter builds the case that practical wisdom parallels what experiential learning literature identifies as personal and social education. Highlighting the similarities between experiential learning literature and Aristotelian virtue theory (and practical wisdom in particular), this chapter establishes the theoretical framework linking Aristotelian thinking with the aims identified within experiential learning literature.

Chapter 3 lays out the methodological orientation of this study. The chapter discusses the chosen research design including a discussion of research questions, the research model, and the particular case chosen for this study. In addition, the chapter considers the chosen approach to data collection, analysis, and interpretation.

In *Part 2: Onboard Class Afloat*, discussion focuses on participant perceptions of the processes and outcomes related to personal and social learning that occurred during the Class Afloat experience. In this way, Part 2 largely addresses the first and second research questions:

1. How do participants view their experience in terms of contribution to personal and social development?
2. What themes (if any) emerge from respondent stories[1] that provide insight regarding how practical wisdom may have been cultivated through the experience?

Chapter 4 explores the ways in which structure and routine are perceived to impact participant learning. The chapter identifies these processes as foundational for participant understanding of habit formation. Additionally, the chapter explores perceived growth in responsibility, discipline, *attentional* flexibility, and self-determination.

Chapter 5 explores personal challenges perceived to impact participant learning. The chapter highlights the perception that Class Afloat invites participants to develop a bigger vision of their lives. Additionally, the chapter explores perceived growth in courage, moderate self-awareness, and perspective.

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[1] Throughout this thesis, the use of "story" references a reliance on people's own accounts by the researcher. Use of personal accounts in this way opens the study to critique regarding the nature of narratives and their construction by narrators. Acknowledging this methodological limitation, a direction for future research might including analyzing these past participant stories with a view for identifying relevant narrative forms and their connection to expectations found within experiential learning literature and Aristotelian virtue theory. (See also, McAdams & McLean, 2013).

Chapter 6 explores social challenges perceived to impact participant learning. The chapter looks at the onboard community-focused culture that develops as a context for reflection, dialogical processing, and the cultivation of friendships. Additionally, the chapter explores perceived growth in friendship and community relationships as well as constituent practices like empathy, care for the other, and love.

In *Part 3: Life Beyond Class Afloat*, discussion focuses on participant perceptions of the processes and outcomes related to personal and social learning that occurred following the Class Afloat experience. In this way, Part 3 largely addresses the first and third research questions:

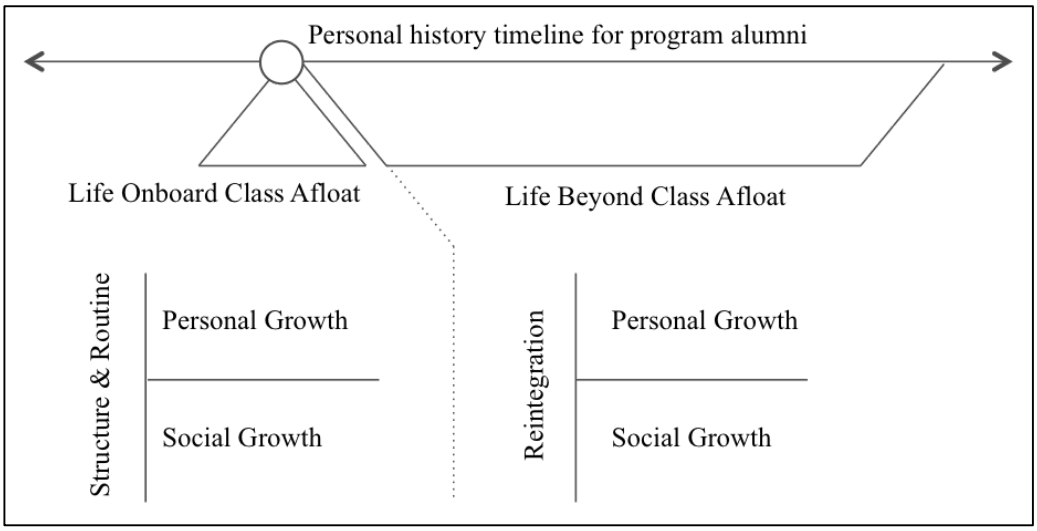
1. How do participants view their experience in terms of contribution to personal and social development?
3. In what ways (if any) do participants perceive the experience to have shifted their personal identity, value commitments, or the practice of virtues – moral and prudential (insofar as these are perceived as contributors to increased practical wisdom)?

Chapter 7 explores the challenge of reintegration to life at home – particularly as it relates to overall perceptions related to the significance of the Class Afloat experience and the importance of the onboard community. Additionally, the chapter introduces a model of transformation – Aristotelian in nature – which supports examining transformation by evaluating the vision, intention, and means applied to engaging the new way of being (Willard, 2002).

Chapter 8 explores personal growth related to values clarification, global perspective, and love of travel. Additionally, the chapter discusses related practices – perceived to have been catalyzed by Class Afloat – which continue to strengthen participants' abilities to mediate right behavior and make practically wise decisions in changing environments.

Chapter 9 explores social growth related to friendship and community building. Additionally, the chapter discusses related practices – perceived to have been catalyzed by Class Afloat – which continue to strengthen participants' abilities to mediate right behavior and make practically wise decisions in changing environments.

The following figure attempts to draw these discussions together, noting their connection.



Structurally, each chapter begins with an overview of a particular theme of respondent stories, illustrating the perceived outcomes and processes through quotations. Next, each chapter links these outcomes and processes – the perceived areas of personal and social learning and the perceived programmatic contexts which catalyzed or cultivated learning – with practices relevant to the theoretical frame. This structure highlights both the emergent themes regarding perceived personal and social learning, and how this learning can be understood in light of Aristotelian thinking about the development of practical wisdom.

Part 1: Foundations

Chapter 1: Demarcating Experiential Learning

Chapter 2: Aristotle & Virtue Theory

Chapter 3: Methodologies

Chapter 1: Demarcating Experiential Learning

Introduction

It has been said that experiential learning "is the reform movement of the future, and it may always be" (Seaman & Gringo, 2009, p. 37). One looming challenge facing experiential reform is definitional. Many educators both inside and outside the field express difficulty identifying what exactly counts as "experiential learning," demarcating the field, and articulating how it is unique. It seems clear that a unique field exists, but where it begins and ends remains mysterious. Through an examination of experiential education literature[2] (hereafter, the literature), I aim to distill several re-characterizations made by experiential educators, highlighting what insiders identify as the unique nature of experiential learning. These characterizations include reframing how educators understand or characterize curriculum, the learning process, the learner, the relationship between the educator and the learner, and the goal – a unique and overriding emphasis on personal and social education. Before discussing each in turn, the chapter opens with introductory comments to briefly sketch the roots of experiential education, suggest beginning definitions, and discuss challenges to demarcating experiential education as a field.[3]

Definitions & Demarcation

Historically rooted in early twentieth century educational reform, experiential approaches to learning developed in response to the perceived failure of traditional

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[1] The literature reviewed for this chapter centers on post-2000 publications sharing combinations of key words common to the discipline (experiential education, outdoor education, adventure education, constructivism, project based learning, etc). The base of journals was expanded to include pre-2000 publications that serve to demarcate the field or are heavily referenced by post-2000 journals and heavily referenced interdisciplinary publications regardless of their publication date. I have tried to draw from a broad array of publications and authors to offer an inclusive characterization rather than focusing on one part of the field (e.g. outdoor education or service learning).

[2] My agenda here is modest, aiming simply to examine the major characterizing themes within the literature. For this reason, I view curriculum and assessment as outside my current scope.

approaches in engaging learners and contextualizing learning. Founding figures like American education reformer John Dewey, Brazilian education reformer Paulo Freire, and outdoor education visionary Kurt Hahn each pursued an alternative aligned with what they took to be more natural learning processes (Allison, 2010; Egan, 2002; Gerhardt, 1993; Westbrook, 1993). Dewey (1902, 1938) and Freire (1993), in particular, characterized traditional approaches as content driven, heavily dependent on the educator as transmitter of knowledge and requiring little of the learner beyond memorization of knowledge transmitted – or less charitably as dull, irrelevant to the learner, and disconnected from how learning occurs outside formal classrooms. In contrast, their re-characterization points to an experience-centered approach (Allison & Wurdinger, 2005; Dewey, 1938; Gerhardt, 1993). On this view, learners do more than receive content; they discover and actively participate with it. Learning presents as an experience-driven process designed to connect the learner's current understanding of the world to intended learning outcomes. Learners engage in experiences, reflection, and meaning construction, and the educator participates as a facilitator and guide. Importantly, this approach blankets the entire learning process with attention on personal and social education.

Demarcating experiential approaches beyond these broad themes is challenging for at least three reasons. First, the literature relies heavily on contrast with traditional approaches. Appeals to experiential approaches are often built negatively, grounded in complaints against traditional approaches rather than generating independent theoretical footing. Apologizing for later progressivists, Dewey (1938) notes that many new theories grow in contrast to a field's dominant theory. Experiential education was no exception, and development of the negative case did help identify and establish a gap between the two approaches. Freire (1993), for instance, likens traditional approaches to banking, wherein learners act as mere receptacles to be filled by the educator's knowledge. This analogy offers a clear contrast with the emphasis experiential approaches place on engagement and learner participation beyond attentiveness.

Unfortunately, the literature's continued focus on *what it is not* has left educators asking *what it is* (Chapman, 1995). As Dewey (1938) notes, "There is always the danger in a new movement that in rejecting the aims and methods of that which it would supplant, it may develop its principles negatively rather than positively and constructively" (p. 6). Still today, Dewey's warning to experiential educators remains relevant.

Second, experiential learning as a field of study has broad and blurry borders. Experiential approaches are claimed in the literature across a spectrum of applications, across disciplines, and across learning environments. Take, for instance, Laura Joplin's (1995) comment that, "anytime a person learns, he must 'experience' the subject," such that, "all learning is experiential" (p. 15). Viewed broadly, the literature lays claim to nearly all educational forums, including single lessons within a traditional classroom (Levers, 2009), student participation in the teacher evaluation process (Brookfield, 1996), project based learning (Butler & Christofili, 2014), service learning (Crabtree, 2008; Kiely, 2005; Simons & Cleary, 2006), outdoor/adventure education (Thorburn & Allison, 2010; Wurdinger, 1994), and expedition experiences (Allison, 2010; Allison & Beames, 2010). Further complicating the matter, many of these approaches apply equally to elementary, secondary, and/or university settings. Such a vast array of outlets for experiential practices further complicates attempts to delineate common practices. Conversely, identifying uniquely experiential practices that also apply across these dimensions requires such a broad scope that the characterization remains vague.

Third, the literature identifies a gap between theory and practice. Thorburn & Allison (2010) critique attempts at experiential learning which merely repeat traditional methods out-of-doors. This critique reveals both the range of practice labeled "experiential learning" and their disapproval of that label's application. Similarly, in a value critique for outdoor programming, Allison, Thorburn, Telford, & Marshall (2011) suggest that to "claim that participants will learn about the significance of climate change and their role in contributing," seems to contradict the experiential emphasis on meaning (p. 211). Here, by contrasting competing values – ecological education and meaning construction within an experiential learning setting – the critique identifies the potential parallel

between ecological education and Freire's banking system. If a learning program predetermines the content, nature of student understanding and values conclusions, it bears asking whether or not learners are active participants in discovering, reflecting, and constructing anything on their own. While outdoor programming would seem experiential simply by setting, this critique attempts to elevate the value of meaning construction within outdoor-based experiential learning programs, over and against the value of place/setting for experiential learning. As both of these examples suggest, an experiential approach implies more than offering a particular activity or moving learning outdoors.

In light of these challenges, a survey of the literature suggests broad themes inclusive of a variety of educative environments, such that they are useful markers bounding what the literature means by 'experiential learning.' Three such themes emerge as essential re-characterizations which distinguish experiential approaches from traditional education: re-characterization of learning and the learner, re-characterization of the relationship between educator and learner, and an overriding emphasis on personal and social education. Each is discussed in turn below.

Re-Characterizing Learning & the Learner

Whereas traditional approaches to education typically begin with the content and outcomes and focus on content transmission, experiential learning is re-characterized as beginning with the learner and experience. The learner, engaged and perplexed by new learning experiences, reflects on them, and constructs meaning from them. On this view, the learning process is fluid, with pedagogical space for both experiencing and reflecting, though not necessarily as linear stages of a learning cycle (Seaman, 2008). This section explores how the experiential learning process contrasts with traditional approaches to how learning and the learner are understood.

Learning as Experience

The experiential learning process centers on experience – both the learning experience at hand, and the learner's collection of prior experiences. Dewey (1938) goes to great lengths to articulate his theory of experiential learning. For him, the problem with traditional education is not a lack of experiences, "but their defective and wrong character...from the standpoint of further experience" (Dewey, 1938, p. 9). As an alternative, Dewey (1938) argues that learning experiences should engage learner interest and connect with other experiences. Critiquing the boredom he saw in traditional approaches he asks poignantly,

> How many students, for example, were rendered callous to ideas, and how many lost the impetus to learn because of the way in which learning was experienced by them? How many acquired special skills by means of automatic drill so that their power of judgment and capacity to act intelligently in new situations was limited? How many came to associate the learning process with ennui and boredom? How many found what they did learn so foreign to the situations of life outside the school as to give them no power of control over the latter? How many came to associate books with dull drudgery, so that they were "conditioned" to all but flashy reading matter? (Dewey, 1938, p. 9)

In agreement, Bhat (n.d.) notes, "the problem with [didactic memory oriented transmission] is that knowledge acquired is not well integrated with prior-knowledge and is often accessed and articulated only for formal academic occasions such as examination" (p. 4). In contrast to traditional approaches, Dewey's (1938) theory of experience proposes a learning environment that kindles the spirit of inquiry by engaging learners in relevant, challenging experiences. Developing Dewey's aim to inspire inquiry, Hunt (1990) notes that "the core of experiential education, as opposed to traditional education, is in the key role of impelling students into perplexity prior to providing much new information" (p. 63). In addition to inspiring inquiry through perplexity, Joplin (1995) suggests that learners become active when they bear responsibility in the learning process. Inspired engagement balanced with learner responsibility, then, represents an important design feature for experiential learning programs. In addition, the notion of active learning cannot be confined to outdoor and

adventure settings. Rather, engaged participation in the process of experience and reflection can occur in a variety of learning settings. Engagement in the process moves learners from passive recipient to active participant in learning – as learners take ownership. Interest is piqued as learners face their ignorance or shoulder responsibility. Furthermore, the notion of relevance is just as important as responsibility. There is particular concern within the literature that educative experiences connect significantly with a learner's unique foundation of prior experiences (Allison & Wurdinger, 2005; Dewey, 1938; Seaman, 2010). As Dewey (1938) rhetorically quips,

> I do not know what the greater maturity of the teacher and the teacher's greater knowledge of the world, of subject-matters and of individuals, is for unless the teacher can arrange conditions that are conducive to community activity and to organization which exercises control over individual impulses by the mere fact that all are engaged in communal projects" (p. 24).

Dewey (1938) offers two principles he identifies as necessary for generating relevant experiences: the principle of continuity, and the principle of interaction. First, the principle of continuity invites the educator to acknowledge that learning is a fluid process. Learners approach new experiences not as blank slates, but with unique perspectives full of experiences and perceptions. Each learner's unique background lends shape to the unique way that learner sees the world. Dewey (1938) observes that outside of formal education the learner naturally integrates past and present experiences – an integration process that, he suggests, fails to occur within traditional approaches. In contrast, following Dewey's (1938) principle of continuity, "experiential education is based on the notion that all knowing must begin with the individual's relationship to the topic" (Joplin, 1995, p. 19).

Further, to understand learning, the educator must understand how learners process experiences. If Dewey is right, and learning is a fluid process that begins long before learners enter a particular learning experience, then well-designed experiences will connect prior experience to the present learning environment with opportunities for reflection (Bhat, n.d.). Furthermore, prior experiences indubitably shape the nature of present experiences through agreement, influence, or guidance, and a learner's

understanding of future experiences is equally and inevitably altered. "Every experience is a moving force. Its value can be judged only on the ground of what it moves toward and into" (Dewey, 1938, p. 12). The literature employs Dewey's principle of continuity, arguing that learning is best understood as process with new experiences providing the impetus for growth.

Second, Dewey's (1938) principle of interaction invites the educator to acknowledge the interplay between relevant objective conditions of knowledge and the unique internal conditions the learner brings to the education setting. If learning is fluid, as the principle of continuity suggests, any outcomes the educator hopes to achieve must intersect the learner's fluid learning process. Dewey (1938) argued that traditional approaches fail to account for the internal conditions of a learner's experience. Within traditional approaches,

> It was assumed that a certain set of [objective] conditions was intrinsically desirable, apart from its ability to evoke a certain quality of response in individuals… Those to whom the provided conditions were suitable managed to learn. Others got on as best they could. (Dewey, 1938, p. 18).

This critique suggests that by undervaluing the learner's continuous learning process, traditional approaches fail to engage most learners. As an alternative, Dewey (1938) chastised progressives who made the reverse error by overemphasizing internal conditions at the expense of objective conditions. Dewey's (1902; 1938) message to both sides was that both the learner's internal conditions and the educational aims are necessary for learning to progress, and they must intersect within learning experiences. Thus, to fit the experiential framework, educators must plan learning environments that include enough flexibility to emphasize growth and authentic engagement in terms of continuity and interaction such that predetermined outcomes are still achieved.

It might be argued that traditional approaches do make efforts to offer relevant connecting points between subject matter and learner. However, experiential approaches claim a different starting point, viewing relevance as central rather than peripheral. Awareness of these mutually dependent principles - continuity and interaction -

challenges educators to dually "survey the capacities and needs of the particular set of individuals" (Dewey, 1938, p. 18) and "arrange the conditions which provide the subject-matter or content for experiences that satisfy these needs and develop these capacities" (p. 24). Following Dewey's (1938) account, the literature argues that relevant experiences allow the learner to have real access to objective conditions because they are designed to begin from the learner's prior experience.

Learning as Meaning Construction

Experiences, then, create space for engagement, and learners assimilate new experiences and reflection with their prior understanding of the world. In so doing, learners make meaning of their experiences. The literature employs cognitive constructivism (Grandy, 1998) as the epistemological frame for this meaning-making process. In line with Dewey's (1938) principles of continuity and interaction, cognitive constructivism argues that meaning construction depends not just on content collection, but the continual integration of present and past experiences which compose the learner's mental map of the world. The philosophical foundations of cognitive constructivism argue descriptively that humans generate meaningful mental representations, based on prior and current experiences, to build their views, understandings, and mental maps of the world - including developing beliefs and associated values (Allison et al, 2011). This view stands in sharp contrast to the transmission model traditional approaches are accused of employing. Cognitive constructivism describes the critical reflection whereby learners engage new experiences aware of their present state and past experiences.

This approach to learning coheres with the literature's understanding of experience in several significant ways. First, cognitive constructivism encourages engagement and active learning by relying on relevant connection to the learner's prior experience. Second, cognitive constructivism emphasizes the tools and resources necessary to construct meaning rather than the meaning itself, effectively inviting the learner to become an apprentice in the learning process. Similar sentiments throughout the literature emphasize the desire, within experiential approaches, for learners to engage

actively in the meaning-making process. Cognitive constructivism provides the literature with a useful epistemological framework for considering how relevant and connected experiences create space for learners to extend their understanding of themselves and their world.[4]

Application of cognitive constructivism in experiential settings pairs well with the literature's theory of experience. Students engage the intersection of past experience and present challenge for the sake of continued learning (growth) not to secure a checklist of facts or skills (outcome). The outcomes are important, but they are not the focus. Outcomes remain somewhat flexible as learners in process play a large role in directing the experience. In this sense, one particular set of facts may be deemed, in process, as more appropriate to learning at that time than another set, while both sets fall under the broader category deemed relevant by predetermined outcomes. For experiential approaches, learning is measured by growth because learning simply is this integrative process, rather than something external that can be captured and measured by a preset list of facts or skills. Thus, learners construct meaning naturally through integrated experiences.

Conversely, students who must constantly revisit what they ought to have learned in school have not failed to learn, rather they have learned in such a way that the content is not available for use in variegated circumstances, because it has been taught in an isolated irrelevant manner (Dewey 1938). This critique suggests that traditional approaches fail because they emphasize content for content's sake rather than emphasizing the learning process, whereby learners discover or construct content and integrate it with their prior experiences and associated reflections (meaning construction). Playing off the words of Jesus in the gospel of Mark (8:36), Dewey (1938) brings home the point asking,

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[3] Tara Fenwick (2010) traces and discusses multiple perspectives – including cognitive constructivism – on experiential learning as it relates to meaning-making. Her monograph, *Experiential Learning: A Theoretical Critique from 5 Perspectives*, identifies values and challenges associated with each perspective, offering further context to this discussion – particularly insofar as two perspectives (constructivism and situated theories of learning) overlap.

> What avail is it to win prescribed amounts of information about geography and history, to win ability to read and write, if in the process the individual loses his own soul: loses his appreciation of things worthwhile, of the values to which these things are relative; if he loses desire to apply what he has learned and, above all, loses the ability to extract meaning from his future experiences as they occur? (p. 30).

Learner as Apprentice

Given how the literature describes the learning process, the learner's role mirrors apprenticeship[5] – particularly insofar as a) apprenticeships rely on participatory experiences to drive learning, and b) the apprentice is initiated into a community of practice that involves practice-embedded problem solving. Though the metaphor of learner as apprentice faces some limitations, it also helps highlight important connections between experiences, the learning process and the learner within experiential learning contexts.

First, the experiential process depends on an engaged learner. Although responsibility for designing and facilitating/guiding experiences falls to the educator, the learner actively participates in the process like an apprentice – learning through practice and repeated experience, taking responsibility, and engaging the community practice they are being initiated into. Furthermore, the analogy suggests intentional learning that aims at a particular practice rather than bifurcated skill development. Motivating such engagement is a significant concern within the literature, which contends that motivation is largely generated when continuity and interaction intersect. If this is true, well-designed experiential learning environments generate motivated learners. Experiential approaches highly value reflective practice (Allison & Wurdinger, 2005; Brookfield, 1996; Dewey, 1938), and not in an exclusively rationalistic sense (Carr, 2003, 2006;

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[4] Here, the term "apprentice" references someone learning a trade or profession by means of initiation into the community of practice which guides best practices for that trade or profession. The analogy assumes a maturing process whereby the apprentice moves from novice to expert through practice – both guided and unguided – with increasing levels of responsibility and an increasing ability to discern excellently within the trade or profession.

Freire, 1993; Seaman, 2006). This seems to support at least advanced apprenticeship modelling, as initiation into a practice requires learning the ways of problem solving suited to that community of practice; that is, learning to discern well (within the context of that practice) and move toward right action and decision-making.

Similarly, part of the maturing process in an apprenticeship requires increased critical reflection. As mentioned previously, reflection need not be conceived as linear or part of a cycle. More likely it occurs alongside the experience, sometimes consciously, other times subconsciously. Either way, reflective practice – both individual and group – is an essential component of the learning process espoused by the literature. The learner learns how to engage experiences and critically reflect on them. Like a maturing apprentice, the learner concurrently engages in thinking and doing. The more engaged the learner is, the more intentional the process and greater the learner's progress and growth.

Second, experiential learners shoulder responsibility in the learning process by choosing. Choices progress the learning process because they require action. As with a maturing apprentice, where advancement and responsibility are tightly correlated, experiential learners are challenged to take on increasing responsibility through choice and decision-making. The choices learners engage lead to deliberation, decision, and associated consequences (Allison & Wurdinger, 2005). In a broader sense, it is by these choices that students are empowered to engage life and learning as autonomous agents. Learners develop their mental map of the world by engaging the opportunities, decisions, associated consequences, and reflections surrounding particular learning experiences (Allison et al., 2011).

Third, the literature emphasizes holistic engagement, claiming that experiential learning weaves together multiple academic disciplines as well as moral and spiritual facets in a given learning experience. Ultimately, a learning experience encourages learners to work toward constructing a coherent mental map of the world. Adolescent learners in particular enter the learning environment with vested interest in metaphysical questions

(as opposed to empirical ones). Given their crucial developmental stage, Allison (2010) notes, it is "difficult for young people to avoid existential and similar humbling questions as transcendental, aesthetic and spiritual issues often come to the fore." Effective experiences will engage learners multi-dimensionally. Viewing experiences holistically requires learners to grapple with inconsistencies in their own meaning construction. If this is the case, coherence will play a significant role in the learner's formation and synthesis associated with learning (Haydon, 1997). Thus, successful educative experiences will engage the whole learner so that interdisciplinary and value related connections can be identified and considered. In this respect, not all experiences are equal, and practically speaking, the educator's practice of developing effective experiences is itself an experiential learning endeavor.

Finally, if learning is an experiential process, then the learner is apprentice to a variety of best practices applicable to the disciplines experienced. The learner is not learning about the practice, but actively entering the discipline to participate in the learning environment as an apprentice practitioner. Similar to apprenticeship, experiential learning develops requisite skills in the learner through experience and guided practice. Outdoor literature in particular locates learners within the practice of adventure education, which is marked by discipline specific language and skills (Seaman & Coppens, 2006). But the analogy is not limited to use in outdoor and adventure settings. For instance, where the practice of history differs from that of literature, learners must access both from the inside in order to make meaning of the relationship between Dickens' Tale of Two Cities, the realities of Robespierre's 'reign of terror,' and political upheaval in the modern world.

In summary, this section surveys the literature's characterization of learning as meaning construction through designed experiences. These experiences emphasize both the process and outcomes. Likewise, this section surveys the literature's characterization of the learner. Like an apprentice the learner must be holistically engaged in the learning process, an inside practitioner of sorts, shouldering responsibility for decision-making

and action as appropriate to the learner's maturity. Next I turn to the literature's re-characterization of the educator-learner relationship.

Re-characterizing the Educator & Learner Relationship

Perhaps the most challenging aspect of shifting from traditional to experiential approaches is the "educator to learner" relationship. This section surveys the literature's conception of the educator-learner relationship in terms of power differential, learning process, and mentorship. However, before discussing these a few comments should be made about trust, which emerges as the primary thread connecting them.

Trust

As Allison and Wurdinger (2005) note, "it seems axiomatic that students have a level of trust in themselves, the teacher, and the curriculum for meaningful learning to occur" (p. 391). According to the literature this is all the more true when learning is approached experientially. Certainly a basic level of trust already characterizes traditional approaches. As Allison and Wurdinger (2005) point out, the structure and expectations of traditional settings are clear and familiar; safety and trust built up by years of traditional practice. Learners understand the role they are expected to play as receptacles to be filled with the educator's knowledge. The role for the learner is a passive one and very little personal extension into the learning environment is required. Ironically, building "educator to learner" trust within experiential approaches takes greater time and effort. There are two primary reasons this is the case – entering into experiential practice is much riskier, and it requires a deeper level of trust than traditional approaches. Quoting at length, Allison and Wurdinger (2005) note that,

> When experiential approaches are utilized, students are typically unclear on the outcome of the experience, because they are placed in a situation that not only challenges their understanding of education but also imposes new expectations on them. In addition, they are regularly asked to experience something new and to articulate it to their peers (p. 389).

Beyond these risks, engagement in experiential approaches exposes learners to significant emotional risk in peer relationships by requiring participation and cooperation. Learners must balance peer risks such as saving face with curricular risks such as maintaining high marks or trust building with the educator (Allison & Wurdinger, 2005; Seaman, 2010). For the experiential approach, trust requires relationship, not just clear expectations and familiar structures. Developing this trust is the responsibility of the educator. Helping learners to see themselves as supported and free to contribute to the learning process encourages active engagement. Often a trusting "educator to learner" relationship develops in line with the learner's realization that the educator values her. This is especially true when that valuing is perceived to transcend learner performance. While the ongoing development of trust becomes a reflexive process, initiation of that process is the educator's responsibility, particularly in light of the historical power structure between learner and educator established by the traditional approach. Importantly, efforts by the educator to establish a safe environment are considered necessary for learner engagement in experiential settings. Learners may struggle to transition from passivity to engagement because the transition forces learners to extend themselves into new territory, assuming the risk of wrong answers, peer judgment, perceived dangerous activity, and on. For this reason, the literature emphasizes development of a trusting "educator to learner" relationship that provides safety and support for learner risk-taking. From an experiential perspective, trust represents a requisite foundation to understanding this "educator to learner" relationship in terms of power differential, learning process, and mentorship.

Power differential

Traditional approaches tend to emphasize a significant power differential in favor of the educator who sits hierarchically above the learner, and who, as the knower, is responsible for depositing knowledge in learners (Freire, 1993). In contrast, experiential approaches flatten the power differential significantly (Allison & Wurdinger, 2005; Arnold, 2001). With experiential framework environments it is the educator's responsibility to diffuse the traditional power differential as much as possible within a

given learning setting (Brookfield, 1996). No longer hailed as exclusive knower, the educator assumes a new role as co-learner and participates internally with the group in the learning process. According to the literature, educators who assume a co-learner role encourage engagement, autonomy, and trust.

"It is absurd," Dewey (1938) argues, "to exclude the teacher from membership in the group. As the most mature member of the group he has a peculiar responsibility for the conduct of the interactions and intercommunications which are the very life of the group as a community" (p. 25). As an alternative, he argued for the experiential approach as a *via media* between the limited learner freedom associated with traditional approaches and the limited educator freedom associated with the radical progressive movement. Dewey (1938) locates the failure of traditional approaches in their tendency to "ignore the importance of [learner] impulse and desire as moving springs" (p. 30). And he goes on to identify specific values of the traditional approach like "artificial uniformity," and the "outward appearance of attention, decorum, and obedience" as examples of this failure (p. 26). The highly structured traditional learning environment heavily limits learner freedom and autonomy. In traditional approaches, educators assume hierarchical control of the environment to maintain these values. As a result, learners often retreat into passivity. The absurdity of this contrived environment is glaring when compared to natural relationships formed outside the classroom. More importantly, the hierarchical authority assumed by the traditional educator, according to Dewey (1938), is fatal to the educator's "acquaintance with and understanding of the individuals who are, supposedly, being educated" (p. 26). Such an arrangement would make it difficult for the educator to apply the aforementioned principles of continuity and interaction.

Conversely, the experiential approach begins with the learner's internal conditions, recognizing the role they play in engagement. On this view, the educator partners with the learner, encouraging active participation - a key part of what the literature considers experiential learning (Allison & Wurdinger, 2005; Brookfield, 1996; Joplin, 1995). Structuring power horizontally communicates to learners that they bring something meaningful (their internal conditions) to the learning process. In turn this provides

learners with autonomy and encourages engagement. Educators have unique access to both the learner and the content. Given this privileged position, the educator is responsible for navigating learner and content interaction appropriately in any given learning situation. From a planning perspective, designing educative experiences requires a careful weave of content training and attention to the internal conditions of learners. "The planning must be flexible enough to permit free play for individuality of experience and yet firm enough to give direction towards continuous development of power" (Dewey, 1938, p. 25).

The traditional power differential further hinders learning by constraining the development of critical judgment. With limited autonomy and freedom, learners are trained to passively receive knowledge. However, as Dewey (1938) notes, "The alternative to externally imposed inhibition is inhibition through an individual's own reflection and judgment" (p. 27). A trusting relationship and horizontal power structure allows learners to obtain greater autonomy and responsibility for the direction learning takes. Autonomy encourages independent critical reflection. Perceived constraints, which are implicit in the traditional power differential, are largely absent when the educator encourages genuine co-learning. The literature favors this horizontal power structure because it allows learners to experience the freedom necessary to practice critical reflection and judgment (Allison & Wurdinger, 2005; Arnold, 2001; see Egan 2002 for critique). Ultimately, the literature recommends this alternative arrangement of power, whereby learner engagement, autonomy, and the development of critical judgment become the focus.

Learning process

A second shift in the "educator to learner" relationship involves educator attention to process. Dewey (1938) critiqued the traditional approach for ignoring process, and the radical progressives for ignoring outcomes. Again suggesting a *via media*, he argued that experiential approaches ought to emphasize both process and outcome, applying his principle of interaction. The literature concurs, emphasizing the development of

experiences that embrace the process without losing sight of real outcomes; both are important (Rubens, 1999). Educators must attend to how learning is occurring and support learner meaning construction by providing appropriate experiences and feedback, and developing the learner's resources, or cognitive toolbox, as necessary (Egan, 2002; Joplin, 1995).

As previously stated, the experiential learning process espoused by the literature centers on meaning construction through experiences. Experiential educators extend autonomy and responsibility to learners throughout the experience-based process, trusting that the outcome (relevant meaning-making) will be fruitful. Incidentally it is this sense of "trusting" which often embattles experiential educators against talk of outcomes and assessment (Egan, 2002; Thorburn & Marshall, 2011). Speaking to the messiness associated with outcomes and assessment in experiential settings, Seaman and Coppens (2006) argue that a situated view of the process would better suit experiential educators than the checklist approach to outcomes often practiced. On their view, assessments should measure competency less by outcome (skill acquisition) and more through process (indicators within the learning situation). Here, the gap between theory and practice is great, as the situated approach Seaman and Coppens (2006) recommend fits literature espoused theory but is often not reflected in practice. In any case, the experiential educator participates in the learning process as co-learner, and encourages meaning construction from a privileged position.

Not insignificantly, the privileged position allows the educator to regularly observe the interaction of internal and objective conditions, assessing the process in an on-going basis. Hunt's (1990) comment about perplexity suggests that an educator's thoughtful use of secrecy also attends to process rather than outcome. Quoting from Plato's Meno, Hunt (1990) asks, "Do you suppose then that [the learner] would have attempted to look for, or learn what he thought he knew, though he did not, before he was thrown into perplexity, became aware of his ignorance, and felt a desire to know?" (p. 63). Tellingly, Meno replies, "No" (p. 63). The educator's contribution to the learning process does not, in an experiential setting, revolve around knowledge. Instead, the

educator first instigates perplexity and challenge through experiences and problems and then assists the learner with in-process support, feedback, and the development of transferable resources (Dewey, 1938; Hunt, 1990; Joplin, 1995).

Experiential educators resist the urge to give answers, being challenged to withhold them and perhaps even admit to not knowing them so that they do not interrupt the learning process. As Raab's (1997) title notes, the educator must become an "expert in not-knowing." Further, educators within traditional approaches tend to shape the details of their curriculum with insights based on personal expertise, belief, or pet interest. The experiential educator, however, must loosen their hold on similar highly specific outcomes in favor of more general or skeletal ones (Rubens, 1999). A personal detachment from certain specific outcomes allows the educator to engage more deeply with the process of learning as it develops with particular learners in light of their particular internal conditions (Allison & Wurdinger, 2005). Accordingly, the literature favors stronger relational bonds between learner and educator by encouraging the educator to limit her role in the learning process and embrace what learners bring to the table. Learners are empowered by the increased autonomy and responsibility (Allison, 2005; Dewey, 1938; Hunt, 1990; Joplin, 1995; Raab, 1997). Increased learner autonomy translates to increased opportunity for developing critical reflection, intellectual virtue, epistemic responsibility, and ownership of the learning process (Allison, 2010; Allison & Wurdinger, 2005; Corlett, 2008; Zagzebski, 1996). This opportunity is supported insofar as the educator attends to the learning process first, allowing the outcome to develop (Joplin, 1995).

Mentorship

The literature further suggests that within the "educator to learner" relationship, the educator assumes the role of guide, coach, or facilitator. As such, the educator functions in a mentoring role. Implicit here is a coming-alongside by the educator. Arnold (2001) characterizes the educator's role, as the "initiator into and guardian of the practice," "enlightened leader of discussion," "exemplar of embodied values," and "provider of

individualized pastoral care" (p. 145-7). Each of these embodies the kind of mentorship espoused for educators by the literature. I will consider each briefly.

Seaman (2006) notes that initiating learners into a practice requires educators to contextualize the practice from the learner's perspective. As a mature practitioner, the educator guides the learner into the practice - defined largely by its cultural moorings - and supplies the necessary resources and guardrails to assist learner success within the practice (Arnold, 1999; Carr, 2003, 2006; Kristjansson, 2007; McIntyre, 1984; Seaman, 2006). At one level, the educator's discipline marks the practice with its particular language, methodology, and culture. At another level, the educator guides learners in the practice of learning itself. In either case, the educator also serves as guardian, helping learners to identify and observe the governing rules and ethos of the practice (Arnold, 2001). As enlightened leader of discussion, the educator acts as master facilitator. This involves judging when and how to support learners in meaning construction (Hunt, 1990), as well as how to engage learners' internal conditions – their past experiences and perceptions (Brookfield, 1996; Dewey, 1938). As exemplar of embodied values, the educator serves as a model for students. Within the literature, this modeling extends beyond disciplinary practice to include the moral realm (Arnold, 2001; Carr, 2003, 2006; Seaman, 2006; see Egan, 2002 for critique). Further, this role requires significant educator authenticity, emphasizing participation as co-learner and loosened control balanced by a clear sense of purpose (Allison & Wurdinger, 2005). "The plan, in other words, is a co-operative enterprise, not a dictation" (Dewey, 1938, p. 31). Finally, as provider of individualized pastoral care, the educator applies critical judgment regarding how learning ought to progress; especially in view of the learner's internal conditions. The educator's concern with process is not just for the sake of outcomes as dictated by the curriculum, but also for the personal and social education of the learner (Allison et al., 2011; Allison & Wurdinger, 2005; Arnold, 2001; Bessant, 2009; Carr, 2006; Kristjansson, 2006; see Egan, 2002 for critique).

Ultimately then, the educator as mentor allows space for critical reflection and meaning construction while guiding the learner toward developing values such as intellectual

integrity, cognitive integration, and practical wisdom (Allison & Wurdinger, 2005; Carr, 2006; Zagzebski, 1996). Growth in these areas occurs largely as learners enter into the practice of critical thinking with freedom to fail, reflect, and grow (Allison, 2006; Allison et al., 2011; Zagzebski, 1996).

An Overriding Emphasis on Personal and Social Education

Often characterized as "confidence, cooperation, trust, and teamwork" (Allison, 2010, p. 5), concern for moral development permeates the literature (Allison & Wurdinger, 2010). This section surveys the literature to identify what is meant by personal and social education, and understand why it emerges as a central goal for experiential learning environments.

Defining personal and social education

Typically, the literature groups personal and social education together in reference to the emotional and moral development of the learner. Personal education, insofar as it can be separated from social development, tends to emphasize the process of critical reflection, practical reasoning, and evaluation or judgment. As an alternative, social education points to how these processes are employed to impact a group or social unit. This may be characterized in terms of functional social dynamics, teamwork, and leadership development. Development of each reflexively impacts the other. Setting aside extreme situations of long-term isolation it is difficult to conceive of one developing without the other.

Theoretically, the literature typically understands personal and social education through the Aristotelian lens of practical wisdom (*phronesis*). For Aristotle (1985), *phronesis* mediates how moral virtues are applied in a particular situation – selecting and activating the uniquely right combination and measure of virtues for that situation in the right way at the right time. Likewise, the learner's ability to discern available options in a given experience, imagine their consequences, and choose wisely reveals competency

in critical reflection, practical reasoning, evaluation, and judgment. Aristotle's (1985) identifies a *phronimos*, or mature person with practical wisdom who can discern the most morally appropriate way to be in a given situation - in terms of motivation, attitude, intention, and action. Similarly the experiential educator holds a privileged position as co-learner, given her unique insight into appropriate disciplinary-based best practices.

Methodologically, Aristotelian *phronesis* develops through repeated cycles of "reflection and experience" (Stonehouse, Allison, & Carr, 2009, p.36). Likewise, experiential approaches emphasize the need for both experience and reflection - though as already stated this need not be a cyclical process. As learners critically engage experiences, recognize available choices, and discern the "best" way forward, their processes of critical reflection, practical reasoning, evaluation and judgment improve. Recognizing Aristotle's (1985) warning that because young learners lack life experience exposing them to ethics is dangerous, the literature directs educators toward teaching through experience so learners gain practice discerning appropriately. The literature echoes Aristotle by arguing that personal and social education happens most effectively when learners have opportunities to practice making reflective and discerning choices (Allison et al., 2011), many of which are value laden (Carr, 2006; Pring, 2000). In experiential settings the learning process largely consists of valuing and choosing. Learners construct meaning out of their choices and experiences through individual and group deliberation. Ideally framed in a setting of educator support and feedback, learners develop personally and socially by imagining alternative choices and their associated consequences (Brinkmann, 2007).

Emphasis on Personal and Social Education

The literature places high value on the learner's growing ability to practice something very much like Aristotelian *phronesis*. Pring (2000) and Carr (2006) are not alone in arguing that education is a largely moral practice. Kristjansson (2006, 2008, 2010) has argued at length regarding education's moral mandate, and its relation to the development of very Aristotelian notions of virtue including *phronesis*.

Furthermore, the literature's overriding concern for personal and social education is not, as it were, tagged on as an additional requirement – it emerges naturally. Experiential learning depends on developing experiences that intersect with the learner's internal conditions. These internal conditions are crucial to creating relevant experiences that lead to meaning construction and are intimately value laden. Properly developed experiences will entice and perplex learners in view of their connection to these internal conditions. Invariably, the learner's internal conditions are a complex and tangled web of intellectual, emotional, ethical, and spiritual representations. Experiences that engage the learner will do so holistically.

Additionally, meaning constructed through new experiences will grow the learner holistically. Well-designed experiences will naturally bring to the surface challenging metaphysical questions that overlap emotional, moral, and spiritual dimensions of the learner. To progress through holistic experiences, learners need strengthened cognitive resources to help them construct coherent meaning and reflect critically. Consequently, a central aim of the literature involves increasing the learner's competency in terms of these cognitive tools, particularly critical reflection and evaluation. From an engagement perspective, the learner is invited into a practice that develops *phronesis*, which in turn suggests that the educator facilitates the learner's development of practical wisdom.

From a values perspective, Haydon (1997) notes that "if there is such a thing as a right or uniquely rational way of thinking about moral issues we would surely want people to be able to think in that way" (p.137). Even without arguing for a "right" way of thinking, the literature argues clearly that in terms of critical reflection and evaluation, some choices are clearly "better" than others (Bessant, 2009; Carr, 1999, 2003, 2006; Kristjansson, 2006, 2007). Further, the literature is deeply concerned with developing the capacity for "better" discernment in learners.

Concluding Thoughts

By surveying experiential learning literature, this chapter identifies and explores three central *re-characterizations* that help demarcate experiential education as a unique theoretical and methodological approach. Theorists and practitioners within the field argue consistently that experiential learning environments must be experience driven and student centered. This perspective sits in contrast to traditional approaches, which are accused of failing to engage learners and critiqued for viewing learning largely as the transmission of knowledge.

Alternatively, experiential approaches preach process and growth. Learning is said to occur as learners navigate experiences reflectively for the sake of meaning construction. The educator facilitates this process. In contrast to the power-differential common to traditional approaches, the experiential educator adopts a co-learner role in the experience, coming alongside the learner as a mentor. Rather than offering solutions, the educator aims first to perplex the learner, and second to encourage the learner toward discovery and meaning construction. Additionally, the educator initiates the learner into educative practice and provides support and feedback throughout the learning process.

Guiding the entire educative endeavor is an overriding concern for the learner's personal and social education. This is cast primarily as developing the learner's ability to reflect critically, reason practically, evaluate, and make discerning judgments. These capacities are applied through social engagement as well as individual and group decision-making. This final emphasis is linked by the literature to Aristotle's ethical framework, especially in terms of developing moral virtues and practical wisdom. This connection to Aristotle and neo-Aristotelian virtue theory is the focus of Chapter 2.

Chapter 2: Aristotle & Virtue Theory

Introduction

Experiential learning places an overriding emphasis on the learner's personal and social education. Within the literature, the discussion of personal and social education often references Aristotle's (1985) ethical framework, drawing on notions of virtue cultivation and practical wisdom within experiential approaches in ways that largely parallel Aristotelian notions of virtue, drawing specifically on the virtue of *phronesis*, or practical wisdom. This chapter explores Aristotle's conception of moral and intellectual virtues, with particular interest in the role *phronesis* plays in virtue cultivation, and draws connections between Aristotle's virtue theory and notions of personal and social development in experiential education.

Aristotelian Virtue Theory

Aristotle's (1985) project is essentially teleological, aiming at happiness (p. 1). This aim was common to Greek philosophers, and arguably most of the ancient and classical world (Annas, 1993; McIntyre, 1984). The "happy life" was identified as a flourishing life – one measured across a full life and involving, among other conditions, regular practice of moral and intellectual excellences called virues. The person with excellent character was happy, not in the "thin" contemporary sense of desire satisfaction, but in a "thick" sense meaning something more like human flourishing. Happiness (*eudaimonia*), or human flourishing, was ascribed to the person who lived the most excellent kind of life. (Aristotle, 1985, p. 7). Pedagogically, Aristotle organizes his analysis of a flourishing life around teleological aims, identifying proper human function in terms of virtues, and describing the acquisition of those virtues such that we might live excellently. This section explores each in turn.

Aims

Metaphysically grounding Aristotle's project is the notion that all living things aim at some intrinsic end or *telos*. A plant's *telos* directs that plant toward nutrition and growth while the *telos* of an animal aims slightly higher, toward sense perception and instinct (Aristotle, 1985, p. 8). Thus, excellence for an acorn involves becoming a healthy, growing oak tree, whereas the *telos* of a bear cub would direct it toward a life of health and well-used perceptions. Humanity shares the ends of plants and animals, but also uniquely has the additional and essential quality of rationality: both exercising and obeying reason (p. 10). For Aristotle, to be human is to exercise and obey reason. Thus, he defines proper human functioning as "activity of the soul in accord with reason" (p. 9). Further, Aristotle (1985) argues that there is a difference between proper and excellent human functioning, and this distinction is critical. For Aristotle, a rose which fails to function excellently is not blameworthy, but a human who fails to function excellently is. External circumstances like poor soil, excessive heat, or a lack of water limit the rose's ability to bloom excellently. Given the rose's lack of control over its success or failure to bloom excellently, we would be hard-pressed to suggest the rose is blameworthy for failing in this respect. By contrast, given their ability on Aristotle's view to reason and act in obedience to reason, humans do have at least some control over whether or not they will live excellently. Excellence is understood in terms of virtues, so for Aristotle (1985), moral excellence requires arranging the "activity of [one's] soul in accord with virtue" (p. 9). He argues that our intrinsic drive (*telos*) urges us toward flourishing (*eudaimonia*) through the practice and development of virtues (p. 8, 17).

Eudaimonia, however, is an elusive aim. Few, on Aristotle's account, ever fully experience the virtuous life. Aristotle (1985) articulates this elusiveness by noting many requisite conditions for flourishing which lie outside a person's control - proper upbringing, a basic level of money, education, and a measure of luck (p. 11), to name a few. Further, Aristotle (1985) argues that *eudaimonia* must be a consistent state held over a complete life (p. 12), and cannot depend too heavily on the opinions of others (p.

8-9). Human flourishing cannot be evaluated in snapshot fashion, assessing whether or not a person has acquired the appropriate combination of dispositions, motivations, intentions and behaviors that, at a particular moment, warrant the title of flourishing. Instead, an excellent life is best measured after the life is lived (p. 12-14). The suggestion is that our dire external circumstances can disrupt an otherwise flourishing life. It appears that, on Aristotle's view, despite our best efforts to live excellently, external suffering can negate our flourishing. For example, Aristotle (1985) critiques the Stoics when he quips that it seems odd to say a man on the rack flourishes, regardless of his life before the rack (p. 12-13). One can imagine the physical and emotional suffering included in the kinds of loss, betrayal and/or treachery that would have to occur for a virtuous person to end up on the rack.

On this view, then, human flourishing is a status attributed to a complete life that becomes continually more excellent through virtuous activity – though it is vulnerable to external circumstances. Ultimately, *eudaimonia* is identified with wholehearted pursuit of man's proper function – exercising and obeying reason - done excellently, through the active development and practice of moral and intellectual virtues.

Virtue

As MacIntyre puts it, "The virtues are precisely those qualities the possession of which will enable an individual to achieve *eduaimonia* and the lack of which will frustrate his movement toward that *telos*" (p. 148). For Aristotle (1985) virtues are complex states, exemplified in particular situations, which draw on an appropriate feeling and capacity to act in the right way, at the right time, for the right reasons. The virtuous state lies between two opposing vicious states: one deficient, and one excessive. In any given situation, we are more likely to miss the virtue hitting either associated vice. For example, when properly exhibiting the moral virtue of courage we have the capacity to feel the appropriate measure of fear and self-confidence at the right time, in the right way, and act properly within that mean. Too much fear and not enough self-confidence would lead toward cowardly actions (the deficient vice). Conversely, too little fear and

too much self-confidence will lead toward rash behavior (excessive vice). The virtue of courage is action located at the golden mean between these vices – such that it is proper to the particulars of that situation.

According to Aristotle, virtues are not generally located in the middle of their associated vices. Instead, they tend toward the more favorable vice; for courage, this is rashness (p. 24-25). Being brave, for instance, requires pushing beyond our fears to appropriate action. More often than not, according to Aristotle, being brave leans more toward rashness than cowardice.

Though courage mediates fear and self-confidence, emotional virtues can "constitute in themselves a mean of feeling" (Kristjansson, 2007, p. 27). This is significant as a departure from Plato's view of emotions. Plato (1985) saw emotions as non-cognitive and generally misguided. On Plato's view emotions were to be distrusted, and brought under control by reason. For him, reason served to police emotions. By contrast, Aristotle (1985) suggests that emotions, though primarily non-cognitive, have a cognitive component. Rather than using reason to police emotions, he argues that emotions can be properly educated by reason to arise in appropriate ways situationally (II.7; Kristjansson, 2007; Homiak, 1999). Emotional reactions like anger, empathy, and fear seem subject to their own mean. Aristotle (1985) recognizes the interrelated nature of reason, emotion, and virtue. For him, virtuous activity requires right action, in the right way, at the right time - inclusive of properly educated emotions and desires.

Aristotle (1985) identifies two categories of virtues, moral and intellectual, to govern the two parts of the soul (p. 18). The moral virtues regulate overt action and govern the non-rational part of the soul including emotions and desires. Aristotle (1985) discusses a variety of moral virtues including courage, temperance, generosity, magnificence, magnanimity, mildness, truthfulness, and wit, with special attention given to justice (Book 5) and friendship (Books 8 & 9). This list is not meant to be exhaustive. By their very nature, virtues are descriptive of the kinds of practices deemed excellent as practiced in particular situations. He uses these discussions to both demarcate what the

virtue attends to, and to describe how such an excellence impacts the overall pursuit of a flourishing life.

The intellectual virtues regulate cognitive activity and belief acquisition, and govern the rational part of the soul (Aristotle, 1985, p. 86). Aristotle (1985) divides the intellectual virtues into two further categories: the speculative and the practical. Aristotle assigns the speculative virtues to necessary matters – things that could not be otherwise, like angles of a triangle or the laws of logic – and the practical virtues to making and doing within contingent matters. The speculative intellectual virtues include *sophia* (speculative wisdom), *nous* (intuitive reason), and *episteme* (knowledge), and attend to necessary truths. Interestingly, the domain of necessary truths for Aristotle was much broader than it is in most contemporary conceptions (Zagzebski, 1996). The practical intellectual virtues include *techne* (technical thinking) and *phronesis* (practical wisdom). Respectively, they are concerned with what to make and do in contingent matters. The former is primarily concerned with planning and production, while the latter is concerned with good judgement and action in relation to *eudaimonia* (Aristotle, 1985, p. 88-90). The moral virtues are largely informed or educated by the intellectual virtues, given the relationship Aristotle suggests between reason, emotion, and desire.

Developing these virtues, on an Aristotelian view, involves imitation, habit, practice, and self-control. Contrary to human senses like hearing and taste, which are naturally present, virtues are cultivated like crafts, "by having first activated them" (Aristotle, 1985, p. 18-19). However, action alone is not enough. Not all practice makes perfect. For instance, Aristotle (1985) recognizes that "playing the harp makes both good and bad harpists" (p. 19). Simple repetition fails to account for Aristotle's implied sense that becoming virtuous moves us toward some ideal kind of action – the way that we ought to behave in a particular situation; the excellent way to behave. Further, opportunity to practice moral action moves us toward some settled state. That is, repeated similar action leads the practitioner to a state of character – for better or worse. Virtues and vices are cultivated by these repeated similar actions taken in similar situations. As one repeatedly acts generously, for instance, the practice of generosity grows easier, deeper, and

becomes more settled as a state of character. Equally, the repeated practice of un-generosity (whether stinginess or wastefulness) in similar situations will establish a settled state of vicious character over time.

Aristotle (1985) also highlights the situated nature of cultivating moral virtues. As Sherman (1999) notes, models for virtuous behavior are "insufficient without the sort of imagination and sensitivity requisite for knowing how a type of action and dispositional response translate to the situation at hand" (p. 248). Aristotle (1985) likens it to the practice of medicine or navigation, such that no prescribed set of rules can dictate actions for each particular situation. It is experience, making increasingly wise decisions as a learned doctor that makes medical judgments excellent. Similarly, a brave person needs to have practiced being brave in situations calling for courage if she wishes to behave courageously in the present situation. Furthermore, it is previous experience of acting bravely that informs what bravery will look like in this present situation – just as similar practice and experience inform a captain's wise decision-making while sailing through a storm. This situated nature emphasizes the importance of practice and experience in virtue cultivation. Similarly, Aristotle (1985) argues that this repeated practice cements particular actions (virtue or vice) as settled states of character. These twin characteristics, "gradual acquisition and entrenchment," together imply habituation as central to virtue cultivation (Zagzebski, 1996, p. 116).

Aristotle's approach to cultivating moral virtues stands in contrast to his prescription for cultivating intellectual virtues. While both moral and intellectual virtues need experience and time to grow, the latter (which are governed by the rational part of the soul) are cultivated primarily through teaching. Conversely, moral virtues (which are governed by the non-rational part of the soul) are cultivated through habituation of the non-rational part of the soul – bringing it into proper order, as it were. As Sherman (1999) notes, on Aristotle's view "the non-rational part of the soul" – appetites, emotions, and in general feelings – "does not engage in reasoning but can listen to reason, and thus partake of reason in a certain way. It can be controlled, persuaded, and shaped by the rational part"

(p. 235). Said in a different way, "practice has cognitive powers" (Burnyeat, 1999, p. 211).

This is not to say that the non-rational part of the soul simply borrows external rationality from the rational part of the soul. As Sherman (1999) draws out, Aristotle has a more nuanced perspective. Aristotle (1985) offers the analogy of a child (the non-rational part of the soul) responding to a father (the rational part of the soul) whereby the child's desires and emotions (non-rational parts of the soul) are shaped through "dialogue with the experienced parent" (rational part of the soul) and application of her own internal "perceptions, beliefs, and feelings" (Sherman, 1999, p. 236). The result is a somewhat confusing sense that both parts of the soul have rational capabilities. Important in this analysis is the intentional nature of emotions on Aristotle's view. Specifically, emotions are tightly wed to "specific appraisals, perceptions, or beliefs constitutive of the emotion" (Sherman, 1999, p. 241) such that a wise person makes wise decisions largely because they fully (including the practically relevant "emotional shading") and concretely see a particular situation and act according to that virtue (Nussbaum, 1999, 177). On the whole, the training of one's non-rational soul to behave in morally virtuous ways mirrors the process of experiential learning – teaching is required, though in a decidedly non-procedural pedagogy. Additionally, it sheds light on the complex and partially cognitive internal processes at play when one externally acts virtuously.

By repeated practice, then, the moral agent aims at making increasingly wise decisions. The repeated practice cultivates particular habits of action in similar situations – virtuous ways of behaving in concrete contexts. Practicing of virtuous habits requires action, but it also requires identifying the morally ideal way of being in a particular situation, and training one's desires and emotions to aim at that same ideal. Thus, "what one is being habituated in changes its content over time, and draws increasingly on reason, perception, and experience, developing sensitivity and imagination" (Lawrence, 2011, p. 248). Similar to connoisseurship, fresh insights surface from the experience gained through repeated practice aimed at the same end. It seems clear that learning through

such repeated experience and practice also involves some guidance, just as the sommelier learns within her own community of practice.

Further, moral situations usually present themselves with a degree of complexity that involves multiple virtues. For instance, making a wise decision for action in a situation requiring justice will likely require proper mediation of other virtues – perhaps bravery and empathy. Aristotle (1985) identifies one virtue, *phronesis*, which provides this needed intellectual backdrop for the acquisition and application of moral virtues.

Phronesis

Phronesis, or practical wisdom, serves moral decision-making and action by mediating the appropriate use of moral virtues within a particular situation. This intellectual virtue is so critical that Aristotle (1985) argues that practical wisdom and the moral virtues are mutually dependent. This section explores the role practical wisdom plays for Aristotle and other neo-Aristotelian thinkers.

Strictly speaking, practical wisdom is a "truth attaining intellectual quality concerned with doing and with the things that are good for human beings" (Aristotle, 1985, p. 90). For Aristotle (1985), practical wisdom serves the moral virtues by individually determining the virtuous mean between vicious extremes, mediating between moral virtues relevant in a particular situation, and coordinating those virtues toward action (p. 98-99). Furthermore, practical wisdom unifies all the moral virtues (Aristotle, 1985, p. 98-99). Regarding the connection between the moral virtues and practical wisdom, Aristotle notes, "we cannot be fully good without prudence or prudent without virtue of character" (p. 99). Reflexively, Aristotle (1985) argues that a person exhibiting practical wisdom must have all the moral virtues, and a person with all the moral virtues must have practical wisdom (p. 97-98). Without the moral virtues, practical wisdom reverts to cunning, and without practical wisdom, good actions are merely natural dispositions. As an intellectual virtue, practical wisdom provides the cognitive element which coordinates and directs moral action, bringing together reasoning and desiring.

On the face, this seems a high bar for both practical wisdom and virtuous action. As MacIntyre (1984) notes, "It is difficult to believe [Aristotle] means all," since we can imagine a man who is "genuinely brave without being socially agreeable," but this is Aristotle's claim (p. 155). It is the moral vision associated with practical wisdom that makes it so necessary for moral action, and a large part of Aristotle's rationale for tying it to all the moral virtues so directly. A developed sense of practical wisdom allows the fully virtuous person to grasp all that is morally relevant in a particular situation rather than have to work it out (Annas, 1999).

At least three unique facets of *phronesis* have been pursued within neo-Aristotelian virtue theory literature: the deliberative or rational perspective, the perceptual or situational insight perspective, and the collaborative or moral character perspective (Noel, 1999; Sherman, 1989). These facets of practical wisdom are necessarily interconnected, and tracing them briefly here draws out the robust nature of Aristotle's *phronesis*.

First, the deliberative or rational perspective highlights the role of reasoning within *phronesis*. As an intellectual virtue, practical wisdom is primarily cognitive, but as a practical virtue, its outcome is action guiding (Aristotle, 1985, p.89). Functionally, a proper sense of practical wisdom enables the moral agent to deliberate over a choice, challenge or situation. Through this process, practical wisdom allows a chain of reasoning to develop which reflects the rationality of the learner's given course of action. The interplay between cognitive activity, belief acquisition, and overt action sheds light on the complexity of practical wisdom, and the difficulty of identifying it as a distinctively intellectual virtue. Through deliberation, practical wisdom educates emotions and desires toward appropriate action. What the deliberative or rational perspective emphasizes here is the resulting sequence of reasoning and its accessibility to the learner, if needed to justify the action.

A second facet of *phronesis* is the perceptual or situational insight perspective. This highlights the situated nature of moral action guided by practical wisdom. Taking the

whole situation into account, practical wisdom allows the learner to both perceive all the relevant features, and interpret them through a developed sense of discernment. Situations arrive with choices for moral action. Discernment incorporates an element of imagination that allows the learner to see all the possible courses of action permitted by the choice. A developed sense of discernment implies a discriminating eye toward these possibilities, leading to choice and action. Practical wisdom equips the learner, through perception and discernment, to see what those lacking *phronesis* will not see. Sherman (1989) and Nussbaum (1978) each explored this sense of imagination. Looking at Aristotle's use of *krisis* (discernment) and *phantasia* (imagination), they noted that "discernment brings attention to how things 'appear' to people" (Noel, 1999, p. 280). The interpretive power of practical wisdom helps the learner see the situation as it is (e.g. recognizing circumstantial patterns, layers, etc.) so that right action can be matched and applied to the particular context.

A third facet of *phronesis* is what Noel (1999) calls the collaborative or moral character perspective. This highlights the connectedness between practical wisdom and the moral virtues (discussed briefly above). Aristotle (1985) noted that any sense of practical wisdom which is not accompanied by the moral virtues was just cleverness (p. 98). This connection between the virtues and practical wisdom is not incidental. As Sherman (1989) noted, "An agent is praised not merely for possession of virtue, but for its exercise and exemplification in concrete circumstances" (p. 50). Virtues are not exercised without practical wisdom, given its role in identifying, mediating, and measuring the appropriate application of virtue in a particular situation. Relatedly, each learner's developing sense of practical wisdom is intrinsically tied to her character. Practical wisdom develops in a particular way for each learner because its growth is necessarily tied to her particular perceptions, experiences, habits and favored dispositions. Thus, experience plays a large role in shaping both our moral virtues and our ability to exercise them through practical wisdom. Without experiences that demand courage, we are hard-pressed to develop discernment in a way that applies to future situations demanding courage. In this sense, a lack of experience exercising particular

virtues impacts our ability to acquire and exercise those particular virtues. Conversely, experiences help learners develop practical wisdom only insofar as they provide opportunity to genuinely weigh choices, practice moral action and develop habits.

This collaborative or moral character perspective also emphasizes the social dimension of practical wisdom. Development of practical wisdom is a social enterprise in several ways. First, the practically wise person cultivates virtuous friendships to create an environment conducive for continued growth. Friendships provide a social context for processing perception and discernment. Group experiences and deliberation help develop the awareness and discernment characteristic of practical wisdom. Second, the practically wise person is concerned with both individual and societal flourishing, so the exercise of discernment necessarily involves social awareness. The practically wise person acts virtuously for the sake of both individual and societal flourishing. Aristotle (1985) noted courage as a possible case where the right action aims at both individual and societal flourishing – as in the case of a soldier going to war – even though it may lead to the undesired end of losing one's own life (p. 40-41). Further, by taking societal flourishing into account, the perception and discernment characteristic of practical wisdom must include keen emotional vision and sensitivity (Sherman, 1989).

In light of these complementary facets, Aristotle's *phronesis* holds elevated status among the virtues. As an intellectual virtue it serves the moral virtues by determining the mean for individual virtues, mediating between them in particular situations, and coordinating them into a particular moral action. Exercised practical wisdom offers the learner both a rational and an affective understanding for why they acted in a particular way. Furthermore, the rational assessment takes into account the particular situation by perceptively identifying the relevant features of the situation, and discerning the appropriate way forward. Finally, the entire process is intimately connected to the developing character of the learner, and both are shaped largely by the learner's experiences and social relationships.

In a related attempt to understand practical wisdom operationally, philosopher Valerie Tiberius (2008) identifies what she considers four reflective virtues that are constituents of practical wisdom. Her approach, "in the tradition of Hume," engages first-person perceptions as "the only source of answers to normative questions" (p. 7). Working to reconcile this first-person approach with Aristotle's account of practical wisdom, Tiberius (2008) constructs what she calls a "reflective wisdom account" which makes sense of the process for acquiring and regularly assessing one's stable and justified value commitments (p. 20). These value commitments bear teleological significance, and Tiberius' (2008) four reflective virtues help the practically wise person assure that one's ends align with what one takes to be important (p. 20). The four reflective virtues serve as "executive virtues" which help characterize practical wisdom, empowering people to live the lives they have already deemed desirable (Keller, 2011, p.790).

As these reflective virtues will be drawn out in detail in later chapters, a brief sketch here will suffice. Tiberius (2008) highlights attentional flexibility, perspective, moderate self-awareness, and realistic optimism as the four reflective virtues. A person with *attentional flexibility* is able to attend to experiences appropriately, shifting between being fully absorbed by varying experiences and stepping back to a reflective posture at the right time and in the right ways (Tiberius, 2008, p. 91). In this way, practical wisdom guides action in alignment with value commitments without interrupting full engagement in experience when that is most appropriate.

A person with the reflective value of perspective, on Tiberius' (2008) view, has two distinct capacities: minimal sympathy, allowing a person to detach from distress over things that don't matter, and the ability to modify one's attitude in light of what one really cares about (p. 97). In this way, the practically wise person is guided toward reacting appropriately in situations – relative to how a particular situation measures against one's value commitments.

Self-awareness, for Tiberius (2008) is "the virtue that guides the construction of our self-conception" (p. 133). As such, a person with the reflective virtue of moderate self-

awareness is equipped to battle self-deception with a critical eye that is open to new evidence, while maintaining positive illusions that encourage further personal growth (Tiberius, 2008, p. 123-124, 136). In this way, the practically wise person maintains an authentic view of herself, which is enhanced by positive illusions without falling prey to self-deception. Tiberius (2008) offers two examples of positive illusions that prove beneficial as moderators of one's self-awareness. First, she considers arguments from positive psychology literature that suggest an exaggerated sense of one's abilities can "actually help us succeed" (Tiberius, 2008, p. 113). Second, she notes that "introspection about the reasons for our preferences can be harmful" and can undermine one's value commitments (Tiberius, 2008, p. 114).

Finally, a person with realistic optimism is "committed to discovering and believing the truth" like a realist, but is further committed to seeking out evidence that supports a positive view of human potential (Tiberius, 2008, p.151). Equipped with realistic optimism, one has "mutually reinforcing" "cognitive and affective dispositions" such that her view of life maintains hope (Tiberius, 2008, p. 152). In this way, the practically wise person captures the benefits commended within positive psychology literature (see Seligman, 1990; Snyder, 2000). Additionally, the practically wise person is better positioned to engage others and endorse a broader range of value commitments (Tiberius, 2008, p. 155).

As constituents of practical wisdom, these reflective virtues are positioned somewhere between moral and intellectual virtues, describing the process by which practical wisdom supports the flourishing life. As Keller (2011) notes, these reflective virtues are "not presented as moral virtues, nor as epistemic or prudential virtues; they straddle the distinction between these categories" (p. 779).

For Aristotle, *phronesis* only explicitly served the moral virtues. Reflecting on Aristotle's categories for intellectual virtues (speculative virtues for necessary matters and practical virtues for contingent matters), Zagzebski (1996) argues that a category of cognitive virtues directed toward "grasping the contingent" are completely overlooked

(p. 214), a category that would include virtues like epistemic responsibility, intellectual courage, academic integrity.

Zagzebski (1996) argues that moral and intellectual virtues do not differ in kind enough to warrant a separate category (for criticisms of this approach see Pouivet, 2010 & MacAllister, 2012). In building her account for a single virtue category, she looks at the function, acquisition, and operation of moral and intellectual virtues to exploit their similarities. Moving beyond the obvious notion that thinking and feeling are different things, she reveals the messy intermingling of cognitive, moral and emotional activity. For instance, she notes that while we consider beliefs formed without reason to be irrational, beliefs are rarely acquired absent the influence of emotion and desire (Zagzebski, 1996, p. 56-7). If moral virtues regulate overt acts in the same way that intellectual virtues regulate cognitive activity and the acquisition of beliefs, then emotion and desire impact the shape of both moral and intellectual virtues.

Conversely, moral and intellectual virtues influence emotion and desire by encouraging and restraining as appropriate. Courage, for instance, manages emotions like fear and self-confidence, encouraging and restraining them to the appropriate mean in a particular situation. Likewise, academics must encourage their desire for truth and restrain their desire to be right when practicing virtues like intellectual honesty and epistemic responsibility (Zagzebski, 1996, p. 157). Additionally, both moral and intellectual virtues are voluntary in that the agent is capable of the appropriate encouragement or restraint, and failure to do so is viewed as a lack of self-control. Thus, while some involve stronger feelings than others, emotion and desire impact both moral and intellectual virtues. Regarding the separate domains of thinking and feeling suggested by Aristotle's division, Zagzebski (1996) identifies a number of states - curiosity, doubt, wonder, awe - which blend the two domains. Furthermore, she notes, "almost all moral virtues include an aspect of proper perceptual and cognitive activity" (Zagzebski, 1996, p. 149). The implication here is that cognitive overlap goes beyond the role of guidance and mediation offered by practical wisdom.

Contrary to Aristotle, Zagzebski argues that moral and intellectual virtues are acquired in similar fashion. On Aristotle's (1985) view, moral virtues are acquired through imitation, habit and practice, while intellectual virtues are taught (p. 19-20). To support her thesis, Zagzebski (1996) identifies a number of intellectual virtues that cannot be taught in the traditional sense Aristotle has presented, such as open-mindedness and the ability to recognize a reliable authority (p. 150). In contrast, she argues that intellectual virtues follow the same path to acquisition as moral virtues: imitation, habit, and experiential practice. In this way, she suggests they are "no more teachable than virtues like generosity or courage" (Zagzebski, 1996, p. 150). Thus, Zagzebski (1996) argues that moral and intellectual virtues develop in parallel fashion just as their ends, action and belief respectively, are parallel:

> One learns how to believe the way she should rather than the way she wants in a way parallel to her learning how to act the way she should rather than the way she wants. And just as ultimately she learns to want to act the way she should, ultimately she learns to want to believe the way she should (p. 151).

In addition to her claim that the acquisition and function occurs in similar ways for both moral and intellectual virtues, Zagzebski (1996) suggests logical and causal operational connections. Some virtues, like honesty, appear to be logically connected to intellectual virtues. For instance, an honest person both tells the truth and is careful with the truth. While the former requires the moral virtue of honesty, the latter requires various intellectual virtues like epistemic responsibility in terms of being justified, and the ability to properly weigh evidence (Zagzebski, 1996, p. 158). Citing causal connections, Zagzebski (1996) offers the example of a vicious philosopher, whose moral vices of vanity and close-mindedness lead to intellectual vices like debating only "straw men" or investing in winning arguments rather than discovering truth (p. 159). In addition to these logical and causal connections, she identifies a number of moral virtues that have intellectual corollaries like perseverance, courage, humility, autonomy, and discretion.

If, as Zagzebski (1996) suggests, viewing all virtues is a single category is warranted, and if these virtues are acquired and operate like moral virtues, it seems they ought also be mediated by practical wisdom. Expanding practical wisdom in this way helps draw

close the realms of belief and action. Practically speaking, "rationality is underdetermined by procedures" and most people's beliefs extend beyond what they can infer from evidence, logic, and testimony (p. 224). It seems reasonable to suggest then, on Zagzebski's (1996) view, that practical wisdom or something like good judgment impacts belief formation (p. 225). Expanded in this way, practical wisdom makes sense of both morally right action and justified belief. For any particular situation practical wisdom is credited with determining the virtuous mean in terms of cognitive and moral "action," mediating between and among the moral and intellectual virtues, and "coordinat[ing] the various virtues into a single line of action or line of thought leading up to an act...or belief" (p. 224). In this sense, an expanded *phronesis* fills functional and theoretical gaps in Aristotle's project by drawing cognitive activity, belief acquisition, and overt moral action closer together. This messier picture, Zagzebski (1996) suggests, offers a more accurate analysis of our own experiences with practical wisdom.

Relevant critiques by Pouivet (2010) and MacAllister (2012) challenge the collapse of virtues into a single category. For his part, Pouivet (2010) offers four such arguments, the second of which notes that so called "epistemic" virtues like intellectual courage and epistemic responsibility are actually moral in nature despite this label. Similarly, MacAllister (2012) offers praise to Zabzebski for noting the moral and intellectual natures of so called "epistemic" virtues, but he critiques her further steps to build an epistemology from the distinction.

Zagzebski (1996), Pouivet (2010), and MacAllister (2012) appear to support the notion that phronesis governs all of these "virtues" – albeit for entirely different reasons: for Zagzebski (1996), because they collapse into a single category, and for Pouivet (2010) and MacAllister (2012) because they are all essentially moral virtues.

The crux, as it were, for Pouivet (2010) and MacAllister (2012), lies in Zagzebski's (1996) further argument that practical wisdom can guide both moral knowledge and epistemic knowledge. Zagzebski's (1996) approach is uniquely attractive to this study

because it expands the reach of practical wisdom to mediate virtues that govern belief and knowledge – the suggestion that as one becomes practically wise one is better situated to behave not just in morally good ways, but also in ways that are epistemically good – believing rightly, for instance. Taken in this way, one must weigh the critiques presented by Pouivet (2010) and MacAllister (2012) against Zagzebski's fuller argument and the additional literature that has grown up around it over the past two decades.

For the purposes of this analysis it will suffice to let this matter alone, concluding only that practical wisdom guides moral behavior including the kinds of honesty, curiosity, courage, and responsibility that guides decision-making in areas that can be broadly construed as "moral action and knowledge of right moral action" (MacAllister, 2012, p. 263). In this way, practical wisdom governs the kinds of moral action and knowledge of moral action requisite for the kinds of personal and social development at which experiential learning aims.

Aristotelian Virtue Theory alongside Experiential Learning

As noted in Chapter 1, experiential educators locate personal and social education at the heart of the learning process, an essential component of educating holistically and preparing learners for the real world. Recognizing common ground with classical virtue theory, moral and experiential education literature draws heavily from Aristotle's conception of character development (Allison, 2011psd; Allison et al, 2011; Carr, 2003b, 2006; Kristjansson, 2006, 2007, 2010; Noel 1999; Stonehouse et al, 2009). This section examines four views of Aristotle linked to and exploited by experiential learning literature: Aristotle's agent-based approach to moral development, Aristotle's situated approach to moral action and knowledge about moral action, Aristotle's dependence on experience for moral learning, and Aristotle's conviction that moral growth occurs through repeated practice and habituation.

First, Aristotle tends toward an agent-based, rather than act-based approach to moral development. Though character education has a documented history within educational

practice, traditional approaches have tended toward deontological and consequentialist (primarily utilitarian) perspectives over the last century and a half. As such, moral learning is heavily prescriptive, favoring deontological and consequentialist structures like classroom rules, traditional proverbs, educator generated behavioral contracts, and limited choice. Though these elements are not absent in experiential settings, the emphasis shifts to value construction within a context of reflection and deliberation. Viewing personal and social education as growth aligns the moral mandate of experiential education with classical approaches to education centered on the question, "What kind of a person should I be?"

Second, Aristotle offers a framework for ethical decision-making that is wholly situated. Similarly, experiential learning locates value construction in particular experiences – each full of its own unique variables. The learning process is centered on experiences which connect the learner to content in a relevant way, for the sake of further meaning making. Thus, priority in the learning process is given to learners' development and decision-making processes rather than their ability to recite maxims. While understanding universal truths is important to Aristotle, the application of those truths to particular situations varies by situational circumstance. As Kristjansson (2007) noted, Aristotle's normative project in Nicomachean Ethics considers "universal moral beliefs that would be fully capable of taking into account every possible situation to be so complicated - although logically possible - that they would in actuality be impossible to learn and apply" (p. 168). Rather than suggest the impossible task of memorizing all universal truths, as they would play out in all possible solutions, Aristotle suggests developing a "perceptual awareness that guides us to the right answer in the greatest number of factual situations" (p. 168). For Aristotle, it is the practically wise person, who does the right thing, for the right reason, in the right way, as dictated by the particular situation. And this, not because the practically wise person determines what is good, but because the practically wise person excels in their perception of what is right in a given situation. Experiential learning places high value on cultivating this discernment in the learner.

Third, Aristotelian Virtue Theory and experiential learning appear to share a constructivist approach to learning (though not a constructivist view of knowledge). As discussed in the last chapter, experiential reformers like Dewey (1938) embraced constructivism along with the epistemic commitments it entailed.

For the thoroughgoing constructivist, knowledge can be reduced to the personally or socially contextualized process of learning. In this sense, knowledge *just is* constructed. Descriptively, it seems intuitive that learning occurs through a constructive process. Whether the teaching method is didactic or experiential, the process by which a student contextualizes present experience (lecture, discussion, group work, or expedition) with their past experiences is well-represented within a constructivist interpretation. Furthermore, constructivism resonates with the intuition that individuals have different perceptions and thus varied understandings of the world.

One difficulty presented by a thoroughgoing version of constructivism is the resulting lack of language for understanding right and wrong in any universal sense; arguably even in a cultural-communitarian sense. Epistemic constructivism leans on a pragmatic view of truth, and disciplines like science are reduced to theory-laden domains dependent on pragmatic ends. For instance, within mathematics numbers are viewed as useful fictions to be manipulated within the broadly accepted social construction. In this regard, Ernst Von Glasersfeld (1993) suggests that a particular social construction (either scientific theory or mathematical construct) maintains acceptance because of greater viability, though as Robert Nola (1997) comments, viability, here, represents little more than a safe, constructivist synonym for truth (see also Irzik, 2000). More importantly for this context, a thoroughgoing constructivism reduces values to feelings and opinions that lack existence and meaning outside our constructed understanding of the world. Reductions of this kind entail epistemic commitments impossible for educators desiring moral development to accept, as moral development implies growth or improvement. Within a thoroughgoing constructivism, Haydon's (1997) search for a "right" or "better" way to think critically about values would be futile.

Given the epistemic commitments entailed by constructivism, the moral mandate for personal and social learning has some trouble getting off the ground. Equally, Aristotelian virtue theory would be hard-pressed to accommodate these epistemic commitments. Though there is some debate over Aristotle's epistemic leanings (Krisjansson, 2007, especially chapters 1 & 11; Nussbaum, 1999; Sherman, 1999), he clearly affirms that the external world both exists and can be accessed - even if imperfectly. For this reason, Aristotle's epistemology appears incompatible with a thoroughgoing constructivist view that knowledge just is the meaning we construct in a learning experience. Some other factor(s) like coherence with a broader understanding, or some correspondence to external reality must be at play. Thus, taken as an approach to knowledge, constructivism carries more problems than solutions for both the experiential educator *and* Aristotle.

Viewed as an approach to learning, however, cognitive constructivism (Grandy, 1998) captures constructivist intuitions without the associated epistemic baggage. Cognitive constructivism suggests that learners generate meaningful representations of the world through their experiences. It does not, however, suggest the further step that knowledge itself is this construction. On a cognitive constructivist account, a learner could have a "better" or "worse" understanding of the world based on the accuracy and coherence of their mental representations. As an *approach to learning*, cognitive constructivism allows space for moral development. Further, cognitive constructivism resonates well with Aristotle's method of virtue cultivation by recommending experiential practice and reflection as the way to make better sense of the world. Though meaning construction looks more like discovery in this context, Aristotle is not suggesting universal rules for action. Instead, given the situated perspective he takes to moral agency, the right way to be is identified as how the practically wise person would be in a similar situation. Following his foundationalist epistemic leanings, as noted, Aristotle (1985) is not implying that the practically wise person determines what is good, rather that she perceives what good intrinsically is (p. 25; see also Krisjansson, 2007, p.109-10, 168).

Not surprisingly then, the Aristotelian virtue theory complements the experiential emphasis on personal and social education. The salient features of both - process, practical judgement, and practice – run in tandem. Aristotle's (1985) project is teleologically driven, having a clear aim of human flourishing in mind. But achieving that end requires significant attention to the developmental process. A person does not just need to know how to be good, they must know what the good is, desire it, practice good habits, and follow the example of those more virtuous. Similarly, experiential approaches view the learning process situationally (Seaman & Coppens, 2006), taking more than the learner's actions into account. Experiences are analyzed through individual and group reflection to assess the cognitive and affective elements at play. Aristotle's use of practical wisdom, deliberation, and discernment within moral development parallels the use of choice (often value-laden), reflection (individual and group), decision, and evaluation within experiential approaches. In both cases habit and practice mark the road to moral excellence and a better understanding of the world. For both, although there may not be one right answer, there are better and worse ways to choose and act.

Finally, Aristotle (1985) argues that virtue is learned through habituation, which grows out of intentional practice and is socially based (p. 18-20). Similarly, experiential pedagogy engages learners in experiences so they can hone practices as personal and social education. These practices – including deliberation, reflection, and decision-making alongside more overtly moral virtues like courage, temperance, justice, or wit – emphasize good value judgment and practical reasoning. The hope is that learners will make wise judgments in all areas of their life, developing and practicing a wide range of values, impacting development in all domains of learning: cognitive, physical, emotional and social.

Further, Aristotle (1985) highlights the virtue of practical wisdom as the mediator and unifier of other virtues (p. 98-99). The person with a sense of practical wisdom understands how to balance virtues like courage, temperance, compassion and justice in a given situation. Thus, by pairing experience and reflection, experiential learning aims to create an environment conducive to Aristotelian habituation by generating learning experiences which encourage intentional practice of judgment and reasoning.

Functionally, practical wisdom offers educators a valuable cognitive tool – especially those practicing experiential approaches. By weighing the situational demands placed on moral and intellectual virtues, practical wisdom connects moral cognition and moral action. In doing so, practical wisdom mediates and guides beliefs, emotions, and actions. Likewise, the educator attempting to cultivate practical wisdom in learners tries to holistically and experientially engage their beliefs, emotions, and behavior. If this is true, then the application of practical wisdom shares significant overlap with emotional education and care approaches to ethics. In this section I will explore these connections.

Concerned with closing the educative gap between moral cognition and action, Kristjansson (2010) proposed an Aristotelian approach, combining contemporary rational, existential, emotion conditioning approaches. In light of the above discussion, practical wisdom appears ready to engage all three of these approaches. Learners with a growing sense of practical wisdom think through situations and attempt to coherently bring together emotions, beliefs, and actions. The practice of practical wisdom presents the learner with a line of reasoning offering explanation for the chosen course of action in a given situation (Noel, 1999). Furthermore, if as Zagzebski (1996) claims, practical wisdom mediates belief acquisition through virtues like epistemic responsibility, intellectual honesty, and integrity, then learners have an added tool to coherently wrestle through the metaphysical questions which impact their developing existential frameworks (Allison, 2011; Kristjansson, 2010). Even if MacAllister (2012) and Pouivet (2010) carry the day, it still holds that practical wisdom offers learners an increasingly "intelligent" decision-making framework for moral action and knowledge

about moral action that will inform developing existential frameworks. Likewise, practical wisdom is involved in properly educating emotions. Aristotle suggested that we have at least some control over our emotional reactions, and managing them virtuously (Kristjansson, 2010; Noel, 1999; Sherman, 1989). If this is true, then practical wisdom plays a role in properly educating and conditioning our emotions (through habit and practice).

If learners are to cultivate practical wisdom, educators must be aware of the connections between belief, emotion, and action, and address them holistically. One of the critiques of modern approaches to moral education has been the reliance solely on rational approaches (Kristjansson, 2010). By failing to connect the learner holistically, these approaches fail to transfer beyond particular rules that govern limited situations. As Carr (2003b) noted, "effective moral judgments cannot be made in the absence of the right kind of sentiments, sensitivities and sensibilities" (p. 44). Attempting to educate from a solely rational position is disingenuous.

Insstead, educators must recognize the reciprocity shared by reason and emotion in informing one another through practical wisdom. Insofar as the rational part of the soul consists in deciding, choosing, discriminating, judging, planning, and so on (Aristotle, 1985, p. 86, 150), it can account for and be properly informed by the non-rational part of the soul (Homiak, 1999). This mutual informing brings balance to concern for justice and concern for compassion (Carr, 2003b; Homiak, 1999; Noddings 2010). Whereas rational approaches tend to over-emphasize justice, care-ethic approaches tend to over-emphasize compassion. Aristotle, however, aims to balance the two by identifying the role both reason and feeling play in moral judgment (Carr, 2003b). Homiak (1999) suggests the practice of Aristotelian friendship as a way to seek this balance. And, as Sherman (1989) notes, friendship plays an important role in the practice of practical wisdom. Aristotle (1985) argues that friends enjoy each other as another self (p. 142) referencing the pleasure friends share in their joint capacity to live well - rationally, emotionally, and in activity (Homiak, 1999).

Noddings (2010) adds that educators must model the balance between justice and compassion as it unfolds in relation to practical wisdom. For instance, if learner experiences are designed around competition rather than cooperation, then compassion and care are more difficult to practice (Noddings, 2010). Similarly, discipline must uphold justice and compassion for both the offended and the offender. Responding properly requires "that one is capable of a certain sympathy of fellow feeling for their plight, and that one also cares enough to do something about it" (Carr, 2003b, p. 82). Confirming a learner's better self, by attributing something like positive intent to their wrong action, shows this care without undermining appropriate consequences (Noddings, 2010). Thus, encouraging practical wisdom in leaders meets the most success when habituated in communities of practice where cooperation and friendship are present. These contexts emerge regularly in active learning environments as practical wisdom continues to be appropriated by experiential educators.

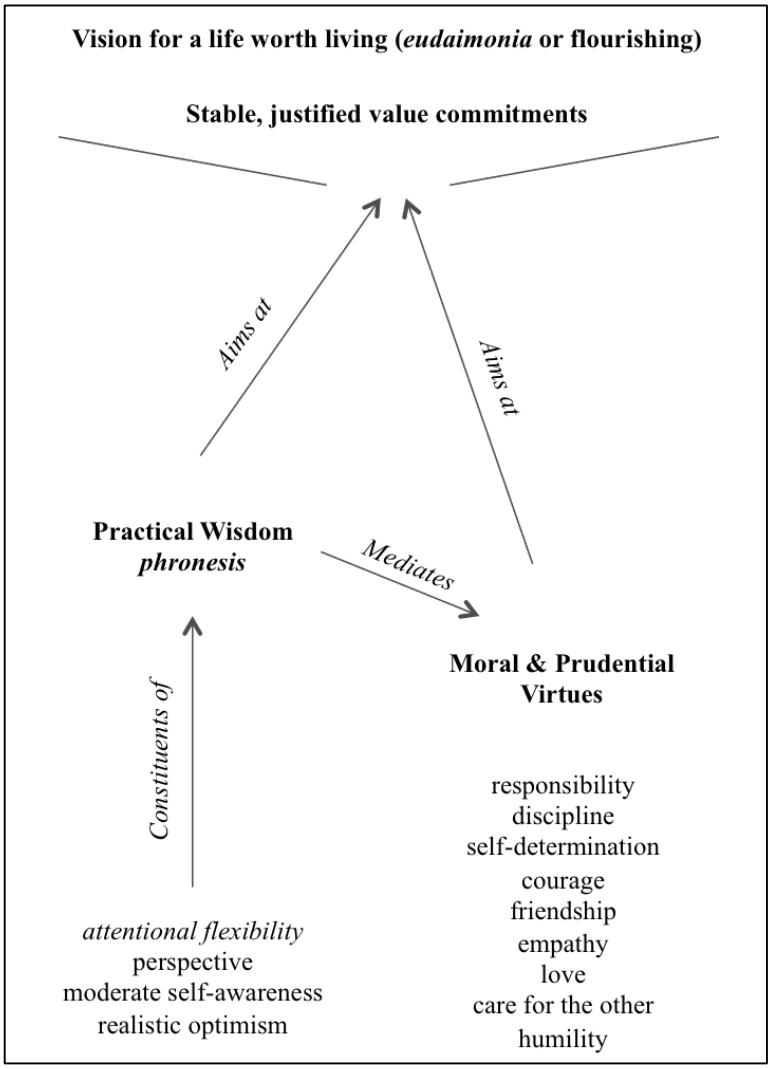
Concluding Thoughts

This chapter develops the Aristotelian framework for moral development, virtue cultivation, and practical wisdom. It does so to highlight borrowed language and goals found in experiential learning literature, particularly in terms of how personal and social education is understood. In light of these parallels, Aristotle's virtue of practical wisdom appears central to developing the personal and social learning experiential educators are trying to cultivate. Furthermore, cultivating practical wisdom depends heavily on experience and practice. The growth process depends on choices that engage learners' beliefs, emotions, and behaviors. Designing these types of experiences is a formidable task. Additionally, educators must exemplify practical wisdom in their own decision-making processes. Through imitation and experiential practice learners can develop habits of practical wisdom. Through peer deliberation and individual reflection, they can expand their grasp of situated moral development. Both educator and learner must practice caring for the other through cooperative effort. If successful, the cultivation of

practical wisdom will lead learners from making poor decisions, to making better decisions, to eventually making the best decisions (Carr, 2003a).

In the chapters that remain, careful attention has been given to understanding how a particular group of program alumni perceive the process and outcomes they experienced during their voyage and beyond, as they relate to personal and social growth.

The following figure – arranging the aim and means of Aristotelian virtue theory – offers a useful starting point, helping the reader to maintain a sense of what practical wisdom is and how it is practiced.



The development of practical wisdom, then, requires development of constituent virtues as well as the development of moral and prudential virtues. The constituent virtues strengthen practices related to the direct exercise of practical wisdom, while the moral and prudential virtues are needed for practice decision-making.

As Aristotle (1985) suggests, without moral and prudential virtues to mediate in particular situations, a person is merely being clever, not practically wise (p. 98). Furthermore, the practice of practical wisdom (as well as the practice of moral and prudential virtues) ultimately aims at a flourishing life – or as Tiberius (2008) notes, a live worth living from the first-person point of view, identified largely by one's vision supported by stable and justified value commitments (p. 3-8, 24-35).

Chapter 3: Methodologies

Research Orientation

Personal and Theoretical Orientations

All researchers stand somewhere (Phillips, 1993). Likewise the shape of any research endeavour develops from a particular collection of philosophical starting points. If this is true, then the naïve hope for unbiased research within education is unhelpful – though defensible, situating the research within a particular essential framework (Hammersley, 1997). In this vein, disclosing my own philosophical starting point (largely Aristotelian) for this endeavor helps locate the work and associated presuppositions – particularly in terms of approaching 'what is' (ontology), how we come to know 'what is' (epistemology), and how a better understanding of 'what is' can change the way we experience life (ethics).

Ontologically, I maintain that there is an objective world and truth exists as a regulative ideal (Eisner, 1991). This objective world is, at least in part, accessible to us, though as Karl Popper notes, truth is like a summit hidden in the clouds and we may not know when we actually reach it (1968). Truth seeking occurs as we make sense of our own first-person perceptions – through direct experience, reflection, and modification based on the perceptions of others – allowing us to construct increasingly accurate conceptions of the ontologically objective world. Epistemologically, it follows that 'better' and 'worse' ways of knowing exist, held by individuals who have more accurately or less accurately constructed understandings of the objective world (Hayden, 1999). Generally, we regard certain accounts – those that are more careful, rational, or warranted – as more objective (Phillips, 1993). By definition, we can expect those whom we recognize as wise to exhibit 'better' ways of knowing (Robert and Wood, 2007). Aristotle (1985) understands these people to have habitually cultivated intellectual virtues such as a love of knowledge, intellectual courage, and intellectual generosity. These exemplars exhibit practical wisdom through excellent deliberation and perception (Aristotle, 1985). If there

is a world we can know (imperfectly) and there are practices that increase our accuracy in knowing (intellectual virtues), then it follows that ethically there is also a 'better' way to live in light of what we know about the world – one which Aristotle (1985) describes as flourishing.

As an educator, it is difficult for me to *not* see the interplay between Dewey's experiential approach to learning and Aristotle's approach to cultivating virtue. Dewey also locates his work in this neighbourhood, citing the ultimate goal of education as the cultivation of good citizens (Broom & Bai, 2011). As the literature review suggests, there is good reason to narrow the claim – from cultivating good citizens to personal and social learning in a way that largely resembles cultivating what Aristotle (1985) calls *phronesis*, or practical wisdom. If Aristotle's (1985) notion of flourishing depends on cultivating this practical wisdom and virtue forms through practice, and practice requires experience, then the personal and social development experiential educators hope for – one exhibiting reflection, deliberation, practical reasoning, and proper action – looks very like Aristotelian practical wisdom.

Relying theoretically on virtue theory introduces several methodological challenges. Aristotle (1985) identifies three such challenges early in *Nicomachean Ethics*. First, he notes that ethics is a field of study that does not lend itself to precision because it is concerned with situated particulars (p. 2). Second, youths have difficulty acquiring practical wisdom because they lack the requisite experiences (p. 3). Third, he suggests that we will not be able to know whether or not we have cultivated a flourishing life (and subsequently the virtue of practical wisdom) until our lives are complete (p. 9).

Grounding this project with a virtue orientation, both epistemologically and ethically, links it to theoretical discussions regarding the process and practice of personal and social education in experiential learning. I approach this research, and data collection specifically, as a neo-Aristotelian virtue ethicist and experiential educator. In that respect, I designed the inquiry to increase understanding about participants' retrospective perceptions of their experience. Commonly, experiential educators make

large claims regarding the value of significant experiences (N. Gough, 1999; Tanner, 1998). From a critical perspective, I hope to weigh these claims against particular accounts collected from participants who participated in a particular, residential, and experiential program that, as such, can serve as an exemplar.

Currently, the theoretical drive for an experiential approach fostering personal and social education is under-supported by evidence that experiential pedagogy can and does achieve this goal. This appears to be true for two reasons. First, personal and social education remains a somewhat vague and varied notion. What is meant by personal and social development continues to be philosophically underdeveloped; identified as something like practical wisdom, or practical reasoning (Allison et al, 2011; Bessant, 2009; Carr, 2003; Seaman, 2008; Thorburn and Marshall, 2011). Second, studies that have attempted to measure students' personal and social development focus largely on immediate change – either during or just following a particular learning experience, expedition, or course (Scrutton & Beames, 2015, see Takano, 2010 for a helpful exception to this trend). This is ironic given Aristotle's (1985) insistence that the cultivation of practical wisdom is measured over a full life (p. 12-14).

Methodological Orientations

If, as Aristotle suggests, growth in practical wisdom cannot be measured in the short-term – e.g. during the experience, weeks later, or even months later – then a longer view must be assumed. In order to make sense of reflections spanning between two and thirty years, I drew from the Significant Life Experiences (SLE) literature. Birthed in the late-1970s, the study of significant life experiences marked an attempt to identify the sort of experiences that lead one to become an environmental activist by exploring personal histories of environmental educators and activists (S. Gough, 1999; Chalwla, 2001; Takano, 2010). Through a variety of survey and case study approaches emphasizing both action and affect driven questions, researchers interviewed current environmental activists to identify the kinds of experiences they perceived as foundational or catalytic to their becoming an environmental activist (Tanner, 1998). Current research in

experiential education, sport, outdoor education, and environmental education continues to draw from the SLE methodology (Cachelin, Paisley, Blanchard, 2009; Harada, 2009; Payne, 2010; Uusimaki, 2011).

SLE offers methodological caution and value to this project. First, SLE research faces critique on several fronts. A. Gough (1999) and S. Gough (1999) challenge the causal link SLE claims between specific experiences and later self-identity. Additionally, A. Gough (1999) argues that by straightforwardly asking participants to self-identify perceived significant experiences, the approach fails to account for the whole person – ignoring age, race, gender, class, and education. Further, S. Gough (1999) suggests the literature fails to capture generational differences in terms of opportunity and interest by focusing almost exclusively on respondents over forty years of age. Such an approach is said to assume experiences that motivated people to identify with environmentalism today will match those of past generations (Tanner, 1998).

In a slight shift from SLE, this project begins with a particular experience (rather than beginning with people who share a particular perspective) and explores personal histories to identify, analyze, and understand participant reflections on that experience. Less interested in the cause and effect dependency SLE has been criticized for (A Gough, 1999; S. Gough, 1999), this study follows Takano (2010) taking "a standpoint that the respondent's accounts are based on their perceptions" (p. 80). Dodging S. Gough's (1999) generational difference complaint, the retrospective nature of this study incorporates a broad range of responses (2-30 years from the experience). Incorporating a range of "long-term" reflections also allows fuller engagement with Aristotle's (1985) view that practical wisdom is best measured across a lifetime than similar studies offer (Scrutton & Beames, 2015; Takano, 2010).

Furthermore, the sampling approach used by the SLE framework begins with activists and asks what events they perceive as contributors to their present-day activism. The sampling in this research engages participants from the same experiential learning

context and invites reflection regarding how that experience is perceived as contributing to the life participants currently live.

Finally, the SLE framework provides a helpful reference point for exploring personal histories that center on first-person perceptions, an approach that maintains credibility given the ongoing support it continues to receive both philosophically and methodologically (Sayer, 2011; Tiberius, 2008). Herein, I collect and analyze respondent stories to facilitate capturing robust life-stories that can more holistically account for respondent self-identification within a broader context (Savin-Baden & Van Niekerk, 2007). Seeking this robust inquiry, I engage Witzel's (1996, 2000) problem-centered interview (PCI) approach – a method particularly useful when collecting and analyzing "biographical experiences and orientations from individual's perspective" (Scheibelhofer, 2008).

Additional methodological influence comes from transformational learning studies, which highlight the dissonance participants experience through these kinds of experience as triggers for development in extended learning settings (Mezirow, 2000). This literature follows a thread – particularly within outdoor adventure literature – speaking to the disruption caused by engaging a new, challenging environment. Further, the return to a home context often elicits a second "disorienting dilemma" (D'Amato & Krasny, 2011).

For example, in a longitudinal study examining participant perceptions regarding the significance of "January winter session" service learning experience, Kiely (2004, 2005) notes, "The data consistently shows that experiencing high intensity dissonance creates permanent markers in students' frame of reference." In a similar study of outdoor courses (16-78 days) connected to National Outdoor Leadership School and Outward Bound, D'Amato & Krasny (2011) note, "Returning to their daily routines post-course seemed to constitute a disorienting dilemma." That is, stepping away from the experience does not silence the dissonance.

While the retrospection of these studies is across a much shorter timespan than those undertaken in this research, identification of trigger points – particularly engagement with ship life and reintegration to home life – help to methodologically frame interview question development.

If the claims of experiential education literature are correct, personal and social learning represents a central (even emergent) feature of experiential learning environments (Allison et al, 2011; Carr, 2006; Stonehouse et al, 2009). One could expect that participants in an experientially driven residential semester program would experience lasting personal and social growth (Allison & VonWald, 2011; Beames, 2004). With a critical perspective, this project tests that claim in a particular, situated context – one that I identify as an exemplar among experiential programs which aim for personal and social learning.

Research Design

Research Questions

This research seeks to understand the retrospective perceptions of participants regarding a particular, residential, and experiential program. Specifically, how do they perceive the experience as having shaped their own lives and influenced their ability to think and live well? Following Aristotle (1985), thinking and living well requires practical wisdom and includes things like 'good perception and judgment' (Roberts & Wood, 2007), learning from experience, steadied commitment to one's values, and appropriate response to circumstances (Tiberius, 2008).

Retrospective aspects of the project aim to highlight varying participant perceptions across varying timespans. For instance, the way participants understand the experience five, ten, or twenty years after the experience may vary. Approaching the study retrospectively invites considerations regarding the ways participants identify with the experience at varying chronological distances from the experience. Further, the inquiry

aims to identify and explore themes participants perceive as significant contributors to their current understanding of self.

Stated otherwise, the retrospective approach allows the study to explore ways participants attribute their current ability to think and live well to various aspects of the experience – from varying life stages. And perhaps most critically in terms of application, the study explores how a richer understanding of past participant perceptions might bring value to experiential educators who are interested in cultivating personal and social growth through their own programs.

This study attempts to better understand the significance of residential programs in participants' lives and the role these programs might play as catalysts for practical wisdom. Prior to data collection, I anticipated exploring participant perspectives regarding their perceptions of personal and social growth through the chosen case – an exemplar residential, experiential program. The study focuses on three central questions:

1. In retrospect, how do participants view their experience in terms of contribution to personal and social development?

2. In retrospect, what themes (if any) emerge from respondent stories that provide insight regarding how practical wisdom may have been cultivated through the experience?

3. In retrospect, what ways (if any) do participants perceive the experience to have shifted their personal identity, value commitments, or the practice of virtues – moral and prudential (insofar as these are perceived as contributors to increased practical wisdom)?

Perhaps increased understanding along these lines might offer educators new avenues in program design, pedagogical practice, and experience development. Additionally, increased understanding may lend insight into the perceived value of participation in experiential residential programming by participants themselves – in view of both short and long term perspectives. Approached retrospectively, increased understanding along

these lines hopes to contribute additional qualitative data directed toward at least two current trends within experiential education scholarship and practice: increased attention given to personal and social education within experiential learning environments and a desire to cultivate something like Aristotelian practical wisdom through attention to personal and social education (Allison et al, 2011; Allison & Wurdinger, 2005; Arnold, 1999, 2001; Bessant, 2009; Brinkmann, 2007; Carr, 2006; Kristjánsson, 2007; Seaman and Coppens, 2006; Stonehouse et al, 2009).

The hope of this study is to grant theorists and practitioners a sophisticated philosophical framework for unpacking experiential pedagogy at the intersection of personal and social education and neo-Aristotelian notions of practical wisdom. Appropriation of these linguistic and theoretical constructs, given their connectedness to applicable research with real participants, may also lend educators new paths toward generating meaningful evaluations and systems of accountability for program development and assessment (Bobilya et al, 2010). Thus, this dissertation seeks to understand how a particular residential, experiential learning context – a voyage aboard Class Afloat's tall ship sailing program – is perceived to have catalyzed personal and social growth akin to neo-Aristotelian notions of practical wisdom.

Research Model

These questions can usefully be approached with a flexible design relying largely on qualitative methods. Robson (2011) notes that a flexible design "will emerge and develop during data collection" (p. 131). A flexible design requires rigorous planning with a loose grip on the direction data and early analysis lead. The "loose grip" afforded by a flexible approach was crucial during several stages of this study. Early data collection led to separating notions of community from notions of friendship. Later data collection brought to the surface an unexpected refrain regarding the significance of work routines throughout the experience across nearly all participants – a discovery that invited unexpected theoretical connections. In a flexible design, these emergent insights

can be quickly adapted into future stages of data collection. The flexible, or emergent design not only allows for such adaptation, it depends on it (Creswell, 2011).

This study engages what Silverman (2008) calls an "emotionalist approach" concerned primarily with participant perceptions of self-experience (p. 15). The study's flexible design began by utilizing a mixed-method approach to illuminate how participants reflect on their own, particular experience, and how that experience is perceived as a part of their larger life-story. For the emotionalist approach to qualitative research, concern for authenticity drives story collection (Silverman 2010). Since this project seeks understanding regarding the cultivation of practical wisdom and since our understanding of practical wisdom depends at least in part on the particular goals an individual has deemed worth pursuing (Tiberius 2008), a first person approach seems most appropriate. Emergent hypotheses and research questions aim to reveal and analyze the role this experience has played and continues to play in how participants perceive themselves. The chosen model takes the notion that first person perspectives offer a glimpse of reality for granted (Silverman, 2010). Additionally, as Tiberius (2008) notes, "it invokes the perspective of the deliberator" (p. 4).

Thus, the emotionalist approach is designed to draw out meaningful reflections of the self (Silverman, 2008). As expected, these insights shed light on each respondent's complex web of affective, rational, and reflective capacities. Aristotle notes that these capacities are beautifully interdependent and need to be trained by one another to function excellently (Kristjannson, 2007). Tiberius (2008) suggests that reflective wisdom or "living your own life well" depends on this integration, and such an approach tempers trust in our rational reflections while simultaneously valuing our non-reflective experience (p.35). Importantly, this thesis is less interested in identifying *what* participants deem to be the goal of living well, and more interested in understanding *how* participants perceive themselves moving toward that goal. In this way, the focus centers on self-reflection regarding that process.

The study begins by identifying and narrowing appropriate research questions and identifying a research model that promises access to those questions. Next, an exemplar case was identified, a questionnaire developed, delivered, and analyzed to establish categories and emergent themes. Then, an interview sample was developed by identifying questionnaire participants willing to participate who met a variety of requirements and filled an appropriate retrospective spread. Finally, semi-structured interviews were conducted with respondents, analyzed, and interpreted. Pilot versions of both the questionnaire and interviews were used to aid construction and clarity of questions.

The Case

Early in the study I began seeking an appropriate case for this research. In addition to theory and literature driven criteria, several pragmatic concerns surfaced. To hedge against potential issues related to language and access to technology, I narrowed the search to programs operating in English speaking, first world countries. Additionally, as a part-time student studying primarily from the United States of America, I narrowed the program search to potential cases located in North America, whose participants were also largely from North America.

Next, I focused on programs extending at least a semester in duration. This criterion was adopted for two reasons. First, semester long programs match academic calendars and are a common length for secondary and undergraduate participants. Second, the notion of practical wisdom is developed through habituated practice, which requires time (Aristotle, 1985). If practical wisdom is being catalysed using experiential learning approaches, we are most likely to identify it in extended length programs.

Additionally, I looked for programs structured in ways that accentuate opportunities for the kind of reflective life Tiberius (2008) imagines. For instance, Tiberius (2008) identifies *attentional* flexibility as a virtue that enables a person to shift from fully embracing an experience to reflecting on that experience at the appropriate time (p. 77-9). An exemplar program would need to both fully engage participants in experiences

and facilitate periods of reflection and deliberation. Repeated practice shifting between these practical perspectives would reflect a mode of cultivating *attentional* flexibility – the practical outworking of Tiberius' conceptual theorizing.

Finally, I sought a program that could serve as an exemplar of sorts for residential, experiential learning. In this way, I hoped to 'study what could be' with a view for increasing potential generalizability (Schofield, 1993). As such I sought a program that met all these criteria intentionally rather than accidentally – that aimed at personal and social education through a residential, experiential program. If it is true that long-term personal and social development is happening through residential experiential programming, then it is most likely to be happening here. Studying the exemplar allows the open researcher to test these claims (Schofield, 1993).

As evidenced by the literature review, demarcating experiential education is tricky. The spectrum of acceptable programs is wide. Broadly, a program is experiential if participant learning includes elements of theory, practice and reflection (Seaman, 2008). For the purposes of this study, I have narrowed the spectrum to a certain kind of experiential program (residential) with a certain kind of aim (personal and social education). Critically, it becomes difficult to imagine the maximally perfect experiential program. Is the perfect balance between theory, practice, and reflection even calculable? Experience suggests that each program would be situated with a different balance given its location, resources, and curricular objectives. Further, each learning period within a particular program would vary in this balance, having a fresh crop of participants with varying personal histories and levels of participant motivation. These theoretical and logistical criteria seem to satisfy Stake's (1995) recommendation to select a case that maximizes learning, is hospitable, and values unique contexts relative to alternative possibilities.

As my initial literature review reached saturation I sorted these criteria and began researching programs that satisfied the criteria. Initial tallies included a variety of programs including urban and rural settings, vocational and internship styled programs,

service learning programs, and tall-ship sailing programs. Of these, I narrowed the selection to two very different programs that satisfied nearly all the criteria: The San Francisco Urban semester offered for college aged students through Westmont College in California, USA, and the Class Afloat tall ship program affiliated with Acadia University and offered for upper secondary through university students in Nova Scotia, Canada.

While choosing between the two was challenging, I selected the Class Afloat program for several reasons. First, the program represented a more dramatic shift from current experience. Most participants in the San Francisco Urban Program were already residential students at their university. In contrast, Class Afloat participants typically transitioned from their parent's home to the tall ship. Thus, the participant experience is more clearly demarcated from other life experiences. Second, while the San Francisco Urban Program included a vocational internship requirement, typical internships were not physically demanding in a way that would preclude reflection during intense experiences (an attribute more likely to facilitate *attentional* flexibility). Conversely, Class Afloat participants engaged in challenging physical ship duties assisting sail crew with ship manoeuvres and completing night watch duties. Third, participants in the San Francisco Urban Program often knew at least several other participants in their cohort, and while they share a house, they are also able to escape the residential setting and access the city most of the time. In contrast, Class Afloat participants rarely arrived with friends and have little space to escape when community related challenges surface. Thus, the potential for relational development and emphasis on community appeared greater in the Class Afloat experience.

The Class Afloat Program, then, represents an exemplar of experiential programming with a view toward personal and social education. The program engages male and female students at the secondary and university levels, is English based, and is rooted in a modern western context. Participants join the programme for either a semester or year long learning experience. Each semester includes a variety of adventure-based experiences including learning to sail a tall ship and visiting foreign ports. Alongside the

adventures, Class Afloat emphasizes formal classroom learning, community building, and global perspective. This combination allows for adequate doses of theory, experience, and reflection. Additionally, Class Afloat has worked with over 800 students since 1984, offering this study nearly thirty years of retrospect.

During the case selection process, I also came across a Master's thesis which engaged Class Afloat – taking a similar research approach to a different question. With a focus on growth as a global citizen, Cleland (2011) developed a questionnaire and conducted interviews to understand how Class Afloat participants enjoyed various aspects of their experience. Cleland's work provided a helpful introduction for understanding Class Afloat and its participants.

Data Collection

Ethical Considerations

Following university guidelines, I submitted an application for ethical approval to the Moray House School of Education Ethics Committee. This application included a description for the proposed research and a detailed rationale regarding potential harm to participants and handling of data. This particular study rates as Level 1, and is regarded as low risk. All participants are adults volunteering to reflect on their own experiences. The data collection methods proposed ascribe to BERA guidelines. A similar rationale was submitted to Class Afloat (though not required) as part of the research approval process.

Making Contact

Early contact was arranged with Class Afloat's former Director, Terry Davies (via email, Sept 16, 2013). Through his connection I was put in contact with the current Director, David Jones (via email, Oct 14, 2013). Over a period of several months, I created rapport, shared the research aims, and requested access to program alumni. We exchanged emails regarding the nature of the study, orientation of the research, and the

like. Class Afloat agreed to support the research (via email, Nov 27, 2013). The first step of support was to distribute multiple emails across a six-week span inviting program alumni to take the research questionnaire. Across the same span, Class Afloat promoted the questionnaire to program alumni through social media channels – a way to target program alumni that attended the program prior to the popularization of personal emails.

In return, I agreed to supply a sample of the survey questions and a final summary of research when the study was complete. All raw data would remain secure with the researcher. Following this agreement, the questionnaire window was opened for respondents.

Questionnaire: Development & Pilot

Potential respondents received email contact from Class Afloat inviting them to participate in the research study. I drafted an email to both introduce the research and prompt past participants to engage in the brief survey by accessing the Bristol on-line Survey system. While Internet surveys garner a reduced return rate relative to face-to-face surveys, they show greater success than mail directed surveys (Robson, 2011). Program demographics suggest that Class Afloat's constituents are largely computer literate English speakers with home Internet access, and demographics suggest that potential respondents are exceedingly likely to have email addresses and make regular use of at least some social media venues (Cleland, 2010). The chosen approach offered accelerated turn-around, mass accessibility, and the low cost a web-based survey yields rather than including mail based surveys. The trade off – a smaller pool of respondents fewer responses – was a practical one given budget limitation. Robson (2011) suggests a number of design strategies regarding length, wording, and appropriate mix of closed and open responses that were incorporated into the questionnaire's development.

The questionnaire consisted of both open and closed questions. Closed questions aided sorting of participants by a variety of variables (gender, age, year of participation), while open questions identified categories and themes resonant with respondents. The primary goal of the questionnaire was to cull categories and themes based on experience

reflections. The survey, then, needed to provide enough data to a) suggest common ground in initial reflections, b) establish starting categories for analysis, and c) assist in developing the topical interview guide (see below).

I developed the questionnaire with multiple feedback cycles engaging supervisor feedback and informal piloting. Early drafts were reviewed and adjusted to increase brevity, clarity, and reach. Once a sufficient level of clarity and brevity was achieved, the questionnaire was piloted with past participants of a different residential, sea vessel program, Semester at Sea. By asking several friends who participated in the Semester at Sea program to reach out through Facebook, I was able to draw 19 pilot responses from Semester at Sea program alumni across six years of participation to the questionnaire.

Initial findings from the pilot questionnaire led directly to changes in the finalized questionnaire. The pilot drew greater participation than expected and the responses offered substantial insight (Appendix A). For instance, Cleland (2011) had grouped multiple community related aspects of the experience together. Following his lead, I did the same. However nearly half of the pilot respondents suggested separating friendships from that category. As the finalized questionnaire data later revealed, the distinction was not just helpful for Semester at Sea participants, but for Class Afloat participants as well. This discovery and associated adjustment also directed later analysis and interpretation. Instead of following Cleland, this adjustment allowed for a fuller account of friendship in the questionnaire. Responses there led to fuller consideration within the interview protocol, leading to richer analysis of this theme.

Questionnaire: Implementation & Analysis

Following the pilot, additional revisions were made to accommodate emergent categorical and thematic shifts. The finalized questionnaire was open for six weeks (Appendix B) starting December 3, 2013. Class Afloat distributed an email request and an accompanying social media posting at the beginning of the first, third, and fifth week (Appendix C).

Each email request drew a surge of responses, decreasing in number across the three requests. The first email was sent to 1,496 program alumni and alumni family members. The email was opened by 599 people and 67 clicked on the survey link (reported to me from Amy Middleton of Class Afloat via email on Dec 17, 2013).

In the first 3 days the survey drew 60 responses, with another 6 responses trickling in across another 11 days. Of those original 66 responses, 24% participated in Class Afloat between 1985 and 1999 (15 years), 34% participated between 2000 and 2009 (10 years), and the remaining 42% participated between 2010 and 2012 (3 years).

In an attempt to increase response rates, I requested that Class Afloat administer two additional promptings (during weeks two and four). The week two survey reminder was directed specifically at program alumni who participated prior to 2010. The week 4 reminder targeted program alumni who participated prior to 2000. Additionally, survey respondents were contacted with a request to forward the link to Class Afloat friends they were connected to through social media. These additional solicitations led to a bump in participants from the requisite time frames. Following requests in weeks two and three, fifteen program alumni who sailed prior to 2010 responded, and another eight surveys trickled from recent alumni (2010-2012). The final push (weeks four and five) drew 37 responses – eight for 1985-1999, twenty for 2000-2009, and nine for 2010-2012. At final count, there were 124 respondents with 79 willing to serve as interviewee respondents (Appendix D).

Initially, the total (n. 124) was discouraging. I had set hopes arbitrarily at 200. Additionally, Cleland's research had acquired more responses (n. 239). Several mitigating factors may have been at play. First, while Class Afloat was supportive of the questionnaire, Ryan Cleland was a former participant and was employed by Class Afloat during the time of his study, allowing him greater pull and access to past participants. Second, in light of time concerns I administered the survey online only, contacting past participants through social media and email. Cleland included a broader collection window and utilized physical mail services. The significance of this decision relates to

the retrospective nature of the study. Specifically, prior to the early 2000s, Class Afloat did not collect electronic mail addresses. Consequently, it was significantly more difficult to retrieve responses from participants prior to the year 2000.

Initial questionnaire results were analysed through Bristol on-line Survey by cross tabulating responses with year of participation. This process aided category and thematic development for the interview protocol (Appendix E). Microsoft Excel was used to facilitate data analysis in search of relevant research trends.

Interview: Development & Pilot

Selection criteria for the interview sample emerged largely from questionnaire findings. Pursuant to the research questions, the sample (n. 16) was developed intentionally as a best available representation of a) spread across participation dates, b) gender, and c) perceived value of the experience. As questionnaire responses began arriving, they were sorted with these three goals in mind. Analysis took matrix form as willing respondents were grouped based on the date they participated in the program (Appendices H & G). Specifically, I grouped potential respondents by the participation dates (for instance, all participants from 2010-2012) with a view to include several group relevant perspectives.

True to the chosen emotionalist model, the interview protocol was developed with a phenomenological focus (Silverman, 2010). Initially, I anticipated conducting multiple interviews with periods of reflection between – thinking that format would lead to more substantial stories (Seidman, 1991). I surmised that to make sense of how participants value their experience within the larger frame of their life-story interviews would need to be tiered – including thick reflections on both the experience, and its embedded-ness in the participant's fuller set of experiences. Seidman (1991) suggests multiple interviews attending independently to facets of the respondent's experience (e.g. life history, details of the experience, and reflection on their meaning). In that vein, I developed a two-interview approach chronologically ordered, whereby the first encounter focused on perceptions regarding life *prior to* and *during* the experience. The

second interview would take a more distant look, inviting a look at *life since* the experience, and reflections on particular themes relevant to the goals of the study.

Several steps were taken to prepare for interviews. First, a detailed interview protocol was written, scripting opening remarks and guiding respondents toward various prompts within broad-reaching questions inviting response (Jacob & Fugerson, 2012). The interviews were designed with a phenomenological focus to invite reflective story telling. To counter-balance this open structure, a series of prompts were written to assist the interviewer in moments of redirection. The resulting mixed method approach facilitated the collection of a robust stories with space for clarification and direction toward theme and category driven research needs (Guillemin & Heggen, 2011; Robson, 2002).

The initial interview protocol consisted of a first and second interview (Appendix F). Before reaching out to Class Afloat respondents, the interview protocol was piloted with Semester at Sea program alumni who had taken the pilot questionnaire. Pilot interviews were performed via Skype (and in one case, face-to-face). Several insights emerged through the piloting process. First, although respondents knew what the general purpose was for the interview and had already taken the questionnaire, most did not remember their questionnaire responses. Additionally, two of the first three pilot interviews suggested preparing respondents with a few background questions prior to conducting the interview. This feedback led to the development of an email that would prepare participants for the kind of reflection the interview would solicit, without being overly directive. This email was used for the remaining three pilot interviews.

Second, attempts to request an initial interview regarding life prior to and during the experience as separate from requests for a second interview about life since the experience felt forced. Pilot respondent stories naturally blended an understanding of oneself prior to, during, and following the experience – moving forward and back in time throughout the reflection. Directing the chronological framework I had anticipated engaging felt forced, and overly dictating (Appendix G). Respondent stories frequently

jumped between life stages. As a result, I piloted the multiple interview approach (n.2) and a single interview approach with a modified interview protocol (n. 4). The updated interview protocol and single interview approach were far more successful – allowing the free-flowing story development I was hoping to capture through the chosen emotionalist approach with an emphasis on a problem-centered interview (Witzel, 1996). Applying adjustments, Class Afloat respondents were prepared with an initial email reminding them about the project which would prepare them for the interview with a series of general, reflective prompts. The interview protocol itself was also adjusted to elicit open story-telling through a series of broad questions.

Additionally, the technology combination I used for pilot interviews was not effective, producing choppy audio and leading to frequent disconnections. Only one pilot interview produced high quality video and audio. During the pilot process, I investigated several alternatives and decided to continue using Skype but to record both audio and video with the QuickTime Player.

Interview: Sample Selection & Implementation

The final request of the questionnaire solicited willingness to be interviewed. Of the questionnaire participants (n.124), almost two-thirds indicated a willingness to be interviewed (n. 79). I created a matrix based on various considerations to see how the potential sample looked against different criteria (Appendix F). I included the following considerations:

How long ago the respondent participated in the programme

Gender

Length of Participation

Positive, Neutral, or Negative Experience

The majority of those willing to interview participated in Class Afloat between 2004 and 2012 (n. 53). The pool of possible respondents included male (n. 25) and female (n. 54)

participants with some participating for a single semester (n. 14), some for two semesters (n. 59), and some for more than two semesters (n. 6). There were only nine individuals who indicated one or more of the following statements suggesting a neutral or negative experience:

> Answered 'No' to the question, 'When reflecting on the Class Afloat experience, would you say that participation caused a change in you?'
>
> Answered 'No' to the question, 'Would you recommend the Class Afloat program to others?'
>
> Answered either 'enjoyable and not meaningful,' 'miserable and meaningful,' or 'neutral and meaningful' to the question, 'Which of the following best describes your current, overall perception of your Class Afloat experience?'

I also looked at other potential criteria, but no other comparisons appeared significant enough to pursue. For instance, I charted how frequently potential interview respondents reported thinking about their Class Afloat experience. Half of the indicated thinking about their Class Afloat experience daily (n. 39), while others indicated weekly (n. 22) or monthly (n. 17). Of the 39 program alumni who reported thinking about their experience daily, two-thirds participated in the most recent three years of data gathered – a finding likely correlated to how recently they were on the experience. More interestingly, 8 of the 10 potential interview respondents who sailed prior to 2000 report thinking about their experience at least weekly.

Matrix in hand, I began to develop a sampling rationale (Appendix G). The primary goal was to gather a spread of past participant perceptions between 2 and 29 years of retrospection. Additionally, I identified several areas for potential comparison – length of retrospection, gender, length of participation, and affective response to experience (positive, neutral, or negative). Using this criteria, I imagined an ideal sample that would include two to four interview respondents from each of five time periods: 2-5 years of

retrospection, 6-10 years, 11-15 years, 16-20 years, and 21-29 years. These year groupings were blocked as close to equal as possible while still including enough potential respondents to meet other criteria. This grouping allowed for male and female participants in each grouping, the inclusion of neutral and negative perspectives, and interviews with single and multiple semester participants.

Next, I tried to anticipate what sample size would reach saturation or redundancy. At the start I imagined reaching saturation somewhere around 14 interviews where two to three respondents per grouping were included. This number locates acceptability alongside other studies engaging phenomenological methods (suggesting saturation around ten), and in-depth interviews (suggesting saturation around thirty) with interview lengths between sixty and ninety minutes (suggesting saturation around ten) (Hewing, 2011; Hitchcock, Nastasi, & Summerville, 2010; Starks & Trinidad, 2007).

I then invited – by email and/or phone call – two to four respondents from each chronological grouping to interview, aiming for the broadest gender and semester length variety possible (per grouping). I initially included invitations to four potential respondents who reported a neutral or negative affective response toward Class Afloat. The nine potential respondents fitting this criterion represented four of the five groupings.

My initial invitation went out to the most recent grouping. Planning for potential, unforeseen challenges, I wanted to begin with a group I could revisit, and the most recent grouping had by far the most potential respondents: 34 as compared to 19, 14, 7, and 5. This approach proved fortunate. Technological challenges caused a recording failure during the first two interviews. Thankfully, those interviews were in the most recent (and most abundant) grouping.

Coordinating dates with potential interview respondents proved difficult. For example, only two of the nine potential respondents with neutral or negative affect who had reported a willingness to interview in the questionnaire were actually willing to interview upon request via email and/or phone. Interviews were completed over the

course of several months. I conducted email correspondence with potential respondents, creating rapport, setting interview appointments, and delivering the Interview Information Sheet (Appendices J & K). The Interview Information Sheet thanked the respondent in advance for participating, shared the purpose of the study, explained informed consent and confidentiality, reviewed the questionnaire, and requested four areas of pre-interview reflection. This email was delivered approximately one week prior to each interview appointment.

Seventeen interviews were completed across the 29 years of retrospect:

Years of Retrospect	Total	Female	Male
2-5 years	*4*	0	4
6-10 years	*4*	2	2
11-15 years	*5*	3	2
16-20 years	*2*	2	0
21-29 years	*2*	0	2
Total	17	7	10

Following the flexible design, and eager to make sense of the data, analysis occurred concurrent with on-going interviews. The finalized interview protocol (Appendix L) served as a guide for interviews. Additionally, an accompanying document with primary themes served as a cue to the interviewer; this list grew during the first several interviews as fresh themes emerged. Themes that emerged unsolicited in more than one story were added to the list so that future interviewees could address whether or not the theme resonated with them through the final two questions.

Additionally, as the above figure reveals, it was difficult to secure female respondents in the most recent groupings. Of the 31 potential interview respondents in the '2-5 years' grouping, all 21 females were contacted with interview requests – by email and phone (when available). I was not able to coordinate an interview with any of them. Similarly, I was unable to coordinate interviews with the 1 male potential respondent in the '16-20 years' grouping or the 2 female potential respondents in the '21-29 years' grouping.

As interviews were being collected, another significant reorganization occurred. Respondent groupings were adjusted to account for life stages rather than the arbitrary groupings the study instituted initially. This restructuring occurred in response to story data and early analysis. It was determined that a new arrangement could better represent the collected data by building chronological groupings around life stages: 2-7 years of retrospection (those still completing their formal education), 8-15 years of reflection (those entering the workforce, largely under 30yo, largely unsettled and in transition), and 16-29 years of retrospection (those in a more settled adult stage, some with children).

Years of Retrospect	Total	Female	Male
2-7 years	*7*	1	6
8-15 years	*6*	4	2
16-29 years	*4*	2	2
Total	17	7	10

This rearranging collapses two earlier groups into a single category and better accounts for natural differences in how respondents developed their stories. The second grouping I used originally is split between those mostly still in formal education, and those mostly starting their careers.

Seventeen interviews were conducted with program alumni who attended Class Afloat between 1985-2012. All interview respondents were given pseudonyms to protect their anonymity in the chapters that follow. Quotations are linked to particular respondents using each individual's pseudonym followed by the year that individual completed their Class Afloat experience, with both italicized.

Analysis & Interpretation

Interview Analysis

Ultimately, this study seeks increased understanding about past participant reflections on a particular experience as it fits in the larger story of their whole lives. In that vein, the researcher must stay focused on thinking, developing categories, and progressive focusing – looking for patterns and triangulation as accounts were compared and contrasted against one another (Robson, 2002). In this study, these efforts led to several moments of crystallization. A clearer sense of the perceived impact this particular experience had on the lives of these respondents emerged.

Following other phenomenological approaches, the interviews were coded by 'theming the data' (Saldana, 2013, p. 175). Units of story were grouped under themes of identity reflection (e.g. belonging, self-discovery, sense of growth) across the chronology of the interview (reflection on oneself prior to, during, and after the experience). These initial themes were investigated across interviews in on-going fashion as further interviews were conducted. In addition to inductive themes, several theory driven *a priori* themes were utilized (reflective capacity, attentional flexibility, perspective, self-knowledge, optimism, & Aristotelian notions of *phronesis*, with a later addition of Aristotelian *techne*) (Ryan & Bernard, 2003).

Validity

As with any study, this chosen design has strengths and weaknesses (Robson, 2002). For instance, Class Afloat participants themselves must fit a certain demographic –

willingness to adventure around the world for 4-8 months, ability to fund the experience, etc. Additionally, questionnaire and interview respondents self-selected, suggesting another layer of openness and uniqueness from those who did not self-select.

Following Richards (2009), validity flows from taking "firm and sound" steps, in "logical progression," such that the researcher measures what she thinks she is measuring (p. 148). In this case, I have tried to take clear steps toward systematic analysis of story data with both inductive and *a priori* categories. My hope is that such an approach increases the breadth of data, such that data includes emergent themes first, without ignoring data directly related to the theoretic lens engaged for interpretation. Additionally, chronological range of questionnaire and interview respondents does appear to represent the varying life stages anticipated by this study's central research questions, securing the unique retrospective opportunity this study aims to achieve.

To this end, the employed logical progression begins with a questionnaire, seeking first to identify emergent themes, and second to test hypothesized themes. The questionnaire was analysed cautiously, aiming only to capture themes and solicit interviews. A similar approach marked interview collection. The interview topic guide begins in semi-structured fashion seeking open story response ordered by chronological stage. Only once the open story response was collected were topic themes introduced to respondents for further inquiry. In both cases, inductive collection preceded introduction of *a priori* themes.

In an attempt to strengthening the internal validity of the study, I have tried to scrutinizing the collective interviews, analysing and interpreting them through a neo-Aristotelian lens. As Phillips (1993) notes, "A view that is objective is one that has been opened up to scrutiny, to vigorous examination, to challenge" (p. 66). To that end, findings have been presented, discussed, and subsequently honed to strengthen the exploration and expression of emergent themes as well as connections to neo-Aristotelian thinking.

Reliability

A balance of saturation, focus, and sufficiency brings this study to a place where both the *breadth* and *depth* of data have been adequately explored (Richards, 2009). What was foggy in early interviews became increasingly clarified through approximately 14 interviews. The final three interviews serve to fill gaps in the study's retrospective facet, and to verify the flattening out of unique data collection.

In both the questionnaire and interview, data is collected through self-reporting – directly and in open story-telling – to retrospectively locate the perceptions of program alumni. These perceptions can and do speak to the perceived personal and social growth attributed to Class Afloat. Collecting these first-person perspectives connects nicely with the chosen theoretical framing (Tiberius, 2008) and follows the methodological approaches offered by SLE and transformational learning literature (Cachelin, Paisley, Blanchard, 2009; D'Amato & Krasny, 2011; Harada, 2009; Kiely 2004, 2005; Mezirow, 2000; Payne, 2010; Uusimaki, 2011).]

Further, these methods share space in the literature with Takano's (2010) retrospective analysis of expedition participants after thirty years, and Cleland's (2011) retrospective analysis of Class Afloat participants with an emphasis on programming and on increased global thinking. Additionally, this study applies the theoretical frame of Aristotelian virtue theory to accepted methods within educational research in ways that are suitable for replication with additional sail training programs and other outdoor adventure oriented programs including expeditionary learning. Furthermore, the methodology relies more on access to retrospective perspectives than length of program, increasing the potential this present methodological approach has to evaluate any educational program aiming at personal and social learning.

Generalizability

As for external validity, this study is situated as an exploration in understanding. In attempting to "study what could be," generalizability of this study rests largely on its

"fit" between the Class Afloat case and comparable research (Schofield, 1993, p. 109). In the narrowest sense, this case offers insight into how Class Afloat program alumni understand their experience as having impacted their personal and social development. Such analysis includes at least two components: *that* the experience is perceived as having contributed to personal and social development (outcomes), and *how* program alumni perceive that change as having occurred (process). The latter investigation suggests potential to generalize this study's theoretical frame more broadly, such that it might inform processes in other programs, as particular programs evaluate how their alumni perceive personal and social development as having occurred.

Additionally, this case is positioned as an exemplar. That is, if theorists want to expect this kind of personal and social development, they ought to find it here. Generalizability from this proposed exemplar suggests, as Schofield (1993) notes, "what could be" (p. 109). In this way, this study helps set expectations for sail training programs regarding what is occurring in a particular kind of experience (at least a semester long, on a tall ship, with particular program elements).

Part 2: Onboard Class Afloat

Research Question 1

In retrospect, how do participants view their experience in terms of contribution to personal and social development?

Research Question 2

In retrospect, what themes (if any) emerge from respondent stories that provide insight regarding how practical wisdom may have been cultivated through the experience?

A brief overview of Sail Training

Chapter 4: Work & Habit Formation

Chapter 5: Personal Challenges & Growth

Chapter 6: Social Challenges & Growth

A brief overview of Sail Training

Introduction

While this study is situated at the intersection of experiential learning and Aristotelian virtue theory, the particular case chosen for study – as representative of experiential learning aimed at personal and social development – is a sail training experience. As such, the reader will benefit from a brief introduction to sail training literature.

This overview has three goals in mind, as it familiarizes readers with the particulars of sail training. First, it reviews sail training literature, particularly in terms of current research aimed at discussing process and outcomes (Schijf, 2014), in order to familiarize the reader with sail training literature, and strengthen the claim that sail training and experiential learning are practically and theoretically similar. Second, it discusses the future research recommendations made by Manu Schijf (2014) and Clelland (2011) at the conclusion of their studies. Reviewing both offers clarity to the gap this study fills as it relates more specifically to sail training research. Finally, this section paints a more concrete picture of what exactly Class Afloat participants do during their experience so the reader has a more familiar context when reading chapters and interview responses in later chapters.

Sail Training Themes

According to Sail Training International (2014):

> [Sail Training] inspires self-confidence and the acceptance of personal responsibility. It promotes an acceptance of others whatever their social or cultural backgrounds, and develops a willingness to take controlled risks. For most who undertake sail training on Tall Ships it is a positive life-changing experience.

Additionally, the Sail Training International website adds that, "Sail training uses the experience of being at sea principally as a means to help people learn about themselves, discover hidden strengths and talents and understand the value of working as a team" (2014).

Furthermore, sail training operators make bold claims regarding the outcomes of their programs. The website for Wylde Swan of the Netherlands states, "Explore your boundaries and extend them. Adventure with the elements, new destinations, and yourself. Develop teamwork, responsibility and self-discipline" (2014). Similarly, Ocean Youth Trust Scotland states, "Discover your true potential and gain skills, confidence, qualifications, friends and treasured memories that can make a genuine and lasting difference. Build teamwork and shared experience."

These are both common and bold claims regarding the value and outcomes sail training offers participants. Furthermore, they are claims that appear to remain under-supported by the relevant research. In his systematic review of sail training research literature, Schijf (2014) identifies two thematic categories – process themes including the uniqueness of a sail training experience and the structure of voyage design and outcome themes including personal and social growth. This section will trace these discussions through the literature in turn.

First, Schijf (2014) identifies a debate regarding the uniqueness of sail training (p. 47). Numerous works make at least general claims that sail training offers a unique learning environment (Schijf includes Clelland, 2011; McCulloch, 2007, 2010; McCarthy & Kotzee (2010). Specifying why this is the case, Ken McCulloch (2007) cites novelties including the "limited space," "restricted privacy," "movement of the vessel," and "inescapability of the whole experience" (p. 300). Additionally, Prijoan Vives (2013) points to the unique relationship between crew and vessel, and Clelland (2011) identifies the novel experiences available on Class Afloat as central to personal growth and increased global perspective.

Despite this review, Schijf (2014) counters that these unique contexts for sail training can be replicated in other learning environments. He suggests, for instance, that outdoor adventure settings can include similar conditions. Citing Allison et al. (2007), Schijf notes, "At the very minimum, these characteristics are very pliable" (Schijf, 2014, p. 48). Allison et al. (2007) go further, suggesting high similarity between the

programmatic contexts offered in sail training and other outdoor education experiences – at least insofar as personal and social learning is concerned.

Second, Schijf (2014) explores the claim that structured voyages offer stronger learning experiences (p. 49). This claim, he argues, is further supported in outdoor adventure education models – programmatic models that Schijf (2014) notes share their educational philosophy with sail training. Amidst numerous works (including Kalisch, 1979; Greenaway, 2007; Hopkins & Putnam, 1993), Schijf (2014) highlights two studies drawing together the facilitation styles prescribed by literature in both fields: Bacon (1983) and Priest and Gass (2005). Both help trace the historical development of outdoor adventure education from less structured to more structured programming. This several decade transition, Schijf (2014) argues, is one that sail training does (and ought to) mirror.

Additionally, Schijf (2014) notes that the evidence of this trend within sail training is largely theoretical, commenting "there is limited empirical research to support these theories" – regarding the notion that these experiences drive personal and social learning – "both within the research on sail training and within the greater adventure education context" (p. 50). Two exceptions are noted – Cleland (2011) and Allison et al. (2007) – as making strong attempts to link processes to outcomes. Similarly, this present research seeks understanding regarding connections between process and outcome as it relates to personal and social development.

Finally regarding the outcomes of personal and social development, Schijf (2014) finds claims of positive personal and social growth through sail training in multiple studies. Again, these claims are supported additionally through outdoor adventure literature – strengthening the claim that "sail training subscribes to the paradigm of adventure education" and that "it is the research on adventure education that provides support for this type of education eliciting positive change in personal and social domains" (Schijf, 2014, p. 51).

Interestingly, Schijf (2014) identifies "long term effects" by citing retrospective studies taking place two months after the sailing experience, supporting this study's finding that few studies offer truly long-range retrospective inquiry (p. 51). Furthermore, as noted previously, studies in outdoor adventure education attempting to measure students' personal and social development have focused largely on immediate change – either during or just following a particular learning experience, expedition, or course (Scrutton & Beames, 2015, see Takano, 2010 for a helpful exception to this trend). This is ironic given Aristotle's (1985) insistence that the cultivation of practical wisdom is measured over a full life (p. 12-14).

Some concern is expressed regarding the potentially negative consequences associated with raised self-esteem (as a category for personal growth) more broadly in adventure learning settings. Schijf (2014) notes a myriad of studies to that end (including Baumeister, Campbell, Krueger, & Vohs, 2003; Karatzias, Power, & Swanson, 2001; Lambird & Mann, 2006) though he concludes, citing a study by Kafka et al. (2012), that these concerns bear no relevance to sail training programs.

Current Gaps in Sail Training Research

Both Cleland (2011) and Schijf (2014) offer sail training researchers direction regarding gaps they see unfulfilled by current research. As noted previously, Schijf (2014) suggests a need for more process-focused research, particularly research that links outcomes to process. Furthermore, he suggests future research should take an "interdisciplinary" approach and work to inform theory, practice, and policy/funding (p. 55).

To this end, the present research focuses specifically on perceived personal and social learning outcomes, with a retrospective sample with unique chronological spread. This perceived outcome focus depends deeply on understanding the relevant programmatic contexts and their connection to personal and social learning. Furthermore, the philosophical lens (emphasizing neo-Aristotelian virtue theory and practical wisdom)

grants a fresh and interdisciplinary approach to understanding participant perceptions, and potentially informing program design.

Contrary to Schijf's (2014) recommendation that future sail training researchers engage a methodology other than self-report, this study embraces self-reporting and participant perceptions wholeheartedly for the sake of the philosophical framework (Aristotle, 1985; Tiberius, 2008). If this study is to understand how participants perceive their personal and social growth, as catalyzed by the experience, in terms of moral and prudential virtues, it seems most appropriate to do so using participant perceptions.

Cleland (2011) recommends future research focus on the power of negative experiences and the role that educators play in the sail training experience. Both of these themes emerged from survey and interview responses and are discussed in this present study.

Life during the Class Afloat Experience

The Class Afloat website offers the following as an example of the daily schedule (Class Afloat, 2016):

> SCHEDULE
>
> No two days are the same when you are a Class Afloat student, but in order to give you a sense of what to expect aboard the vessel, here is a typical shipboard schedule:
>
> MEALS
>
> | | |
> |---|---|
> | 07:30 | Breakfast, Ready for the Day |
> | 12:30 to 13:30 | Lunch |
> | 17:30 to 18:30 | Dinner and Galley Duty |
> | 08:00 | Colours. (A short assembly for the entire crew where we discuss daily announcements about classes, club and activity meetings, |

	birthday celebrations, sea position and weather reports, and any other community news.)
08:15 - 09:00	Cleaning Stations. (Essential daily cleaning routines that make the vessel ship-shape for the day.)
09:00 - 19:00	Academic Timetable. (Students attend up to 5 hour-long scheduled academic classes each day.)
Day Watch	Two hours of Day Watch are built into the timetable. Students take an active role in sailing maneuvers and ship maintenance.
Free Time	When students are not in class or on watch, they are free to rest, study, socialise with friends, or help out with the sailing.
19:30 - 22:00	Evening Activities. (Studying, socializing, club meetings, and other organized activities such as coffee houses, movie and karaoke nights.)
22:00	Lights Out.
20:00 - 08:00	On a rotating basis, students are assigned to 2 hours of night watch.

Furthermore, the inclusion of "sailing maneuvers" in the schedule under "Day Watch" includes "setting the sails," "steering the ship," "starting and monitoring the engines," and completing challenges like climbing the Main Royale (Class Afloat, 2014).

In addition to this daily onboard schedule, participants engage a variety of port experiences. Port visits vary, but typically the ship stops for 3-5 days in each port (Class Afloat, 2014). Field experiences are coordinated with onboard academic curriculum, and free time is allotted. As an example, the 2016-2017 itinerary includes port calls as follows:

SEMESTER 1

Amsterdam, Netherlands	Sept 06 – 09, 2016
Lisbon, Portugal	Sept 22 – 26, 2016
Barcelona, Spain	Oct 05 – 09, 2016
Tenerife, Canary Islands	Nov 03 – 07, 2016
Dakar, Senegal	Nov 15 – 19, 2016
Fernando de Noronha, Brazil	Dec 02 – 04, 2016
Natal, Brazil	Dec 06 – 10, 2016
Montevideo, Uruguay	Jan 01 – 10, 2017
SEMESTER 2	
Montevideo, Uruguay	Jan 10 – 13, 2017
Tristan da Cunha, UK	Feb 01 – 02, 2017
Cape Town, South Africa	Feb 16 – 20, 2017
St. Helena, UK	Mar 07 – 10, 2017
Ascension, UK	Mar 17 – 20, 2017
Bridgetown, Barbados	Apr 15 – 19, 2017
Samana, Dominican Republic	Apr 25 – 30, 2017
Hamilton, Bermuda	May 09 – 12, 2017
Lunenburg, Nova Scotia, Canada	May 21 – 23, 2017

Chapter 4: Work & Habit Formation

Introduction

Somewhat unexpectedly, nearly all respondents identified work on the ship as a significant element of their experience by reflecting on particular memories of work experiences and linking them to elements of personal and social development. The hypotheses of this study anticipated personal and social development being largely – perhaps exclusively – housed in programmatic elements centered on deliberation, processing, and reflection. Aiming to uncover the personal and social development participants perceive experiencing, attention was diverted from the physical demands of the ship and the routine inherent in accomplishing all the duties required to sail. Interviews, however, suggest this approach was not consistent with participant experience. Respondent reflections repeatedly pointed to memories of work on board Class Afloat. The established ship routine itself provided a unique foundation for fostering things like personal accountability, shared goals, community, and reflective virtues.

Aristotle (1985) identifies *techne* as that practical excellence associated with work whose primary aim is production. In contrast, *phronesis* (practical wisdom) is concerned primarily with feelings and actions – not production. What respondent comments began to suggest, however, was the role *techne* might play in linking the abstracted personal and social development of *phronesis* with the concrete and physically demanding practice of skilled production as participants were invited into the practice of sailing and caring for a tall ship. This chapter examines respondent reflections on work – largely ship duties and responsibilities – with a view for how those stories reveal personal and social learning in terms of responsibility, discipline, the ability to form habits, and the ability to reflect well on one's own experiences.

Work Afloat

Class Afloat participants, in addition to attending classes and enjoying ports, participate in many of the daily tasks of ship life. As *Kim 2005* notes, "It was incredible learning how much work is involved in getting a tall ship to go from point A to point B, and it's a great way for young people to learn what it is like to make a contribution."

This "contribution" takes on a variety of forms including morning and night watch duties, cleaning, cooking, practicing challenging sailing maneuvers, and joining the professional crew to secure the ship in unexpected circumstances and bad weather. The rhythm of ship life is largely defined by these duties.

As noted above, experiential literature and theoretical framing via Aristotelian virtue theory suggested an inquiry focused on personal and social development. As such, a false assumption was held that the experience provided by ship duties was tertiary to the aim of the research, given the structure and mandatory and circumstantial nature of these duties on board Class Afloat. In contrast to most experiential education programs, ship duties are highly structured experiences, and the value they might present as incubators for virtue development was largely absent from both the literature and researcher expectation. Even following the analysis of questionnaire data, there were no strong indicators that interviews would offer a significant discussion of ship duties that connected in an important way to participant understanding of personal and social development. Yet, that is exactly what respondent stories provided. Each participant talked about ship duties and voluntarily suggested overt connections to their own personal and social development – whether in regards to the physical demands and frustration associated with ship duties, the development of team and shared values that created participant interdependence through obligation, or straightforwardly as activities that guided learning to form habits in life.

Respondents discussed work aboard Class Afloat in several very different forms. Some duties such as working the rigging and completing sailing maneuvers rely heavily on developed skill, consistent focus, significant physical exertion, and setting aside fear.

Others, like night watch, present participants with opportunities for individual reflection, group deliberation, and relationship building. Still others, like preparing meals and cleaning the ship offer some combination of the varying physical, mental, and emotional engagement mentioned above. The variegated types of work and associated connections to other aspects of ship life make ship duties and responsibilities a rich connecting point for participant engagement both personally and socially. Surprising as it was, I learned quickly that the role of work was significant to each respondents' reflection on their experience.

For most participants the introduction of discipline through duties presented challenge. *Scott 2011* talks at length about the jointly physical and emotional challenge generated by the cycle of ship duties. Recalling a certain "idle hands" call where all participants are called to the deck to perform a particular sailing maneuver he notes:

> You're working so hard, and you're so tired – you've only slept five hours – you have all these duties and you think everyone who is above you is stupid. So, just as I was laying my head down for a nap and finally feeling happy, because I was exhausted, the idle hands call came. And at that point I was like 'Fuck this man, like I just can't get up – I'm stuck here. And anything I do – I can't rest. Tomorrow I have to do this, the day after that I have to do this, and there's no visible end to it all. And you feel trapped. I wanted to go out but I was just so tired.

Scott's 2011 experience was not isolated. Nearly every respondent (n. 15) shared similar reflections on the jointly physical and emotional challenge provided by engagement with ship duties. Few, though, focused on frustration like *Scott 2011*. For instance, *Nate 2009* calls Class Afloat, "the most challenging and defining experience of his life," largely because "the work was incredibly difficult, forcing [him] to push through, accept [his] role, and embrace it." Similarly, *John 2012*, *Carter 2011*, and *Jess 2008* identify ship responsibilities as challenging, but highlight their own personal growth through those duties. Despite the exhaustion involved in night duty, *John 2012* praises the programmatic requirement for cultivating in him a shared obligation toward the crew, requiring everyone to "learn to carry one's own share of the burden." For *Carter 2011*,

duties catalyzed a mix of confidence and overcoming fears through his repeated practice of ship duties:

> Learning lines and rigging, new terminology, whipping and fusing lines, dicing garlic, and just coping with stress and fatigue helped me gain confidence I didn't have. It was the trial and error and repeated exposure and proactive experience – I became more familiar, more confident, more willing to step out and learn.

For *John 2012* and *Carter 2011*, the introduction of routine was a new experience, and the shared expression of duty across the crew cultivated what they both refer to as grit – a tapestry of enduring perseverance, self-confidence, and realistic optimism in the face of hardship, exhaustion, and fear. *Carter 2011* links his own personal growth to his continued engagement in ship duties despite exhaustion and fear – something that depended heavily on "throwing in with the team" to complete tasks. Similarly, for *Jess 2008*, mutual dependence among the crew – specifically in terms of duties and responsibilities – forced her to develop into a "tougher person," gaining confidence and "a can-do attitude."

Older respondents more frequently highlighted the benefits associated with ship responsibilities, attributing Class Afloat with catalyzing the value of structure, responsibility, and healthy obligation in their lives generally. *Paul 1989* notes that he "gained a sense of responsibility for others through duties, standing watch," and owning the sense of obligation implied by a night watchman. Hoping to send his children on the Class Afloat experience someday, *Thomas 1985* expresses concern, based on stories he has heard at reunions and alumni events, that the ship experience may be getting too soft to instill the same work values he experienced. *Rebecca 1995* speaks at length about the long-term impact ship duties and routine had on her life, suggesting her learning experience has since transferred to the rest of her life. She notes that the experience taught her to become a harder worker, alter her own habits, and cultivate a deep desire to be productive with her time. In short, she attributes the arrangement of work aboard Class Afloat with redefining several deeply held values for the better.

Obligation to the community was repeatedly identified as a central motivation for participation and engagement in ship duties and responsibilities. Although a professional crew accompanies the ship, high expectations exist for participation in assigned duties. As a result, participants each share a load of responsibilities that must be accomplished. *Scott 2011* identifies "going all in" as a significant lesson he learned from observing those who carried their full load and those who did not:

> The thing about work on the boat is that there is so much of it on the boat, and it sucks because you always feel like not everyone is putting in the same amount of work. But, you make it whatever it is you want. There was no such thing as not being able to go all in – and that's what was fun.

Jennifer 1999 highlights ship duties saying, "When sailing, we had to learn what to do and then begin applying it – and it was challenging work climbing the rigging. I remember cleaning for two hours as part of my duties and even though it was difficult, I look back on it fondly." Similarly, *Carter 2011* talks about the "social pressure to pitch in," that existed on board Class Afloat noting, "Hard workers were respected." Acknowledging that ship duties were challenging, he emphasizes their value by his commitment to "making it work" in spite of the tension and stressors:

> The whole work experience is so mentally and physically engaging that you get overwhelmed. But you have to do your part. You pull your weight for the team. So even when we were tired or hungry, physically exhausted, we found a way to push through the drama and stress and tension.

When a participant fails to fulfill her responsibilities, other participants must absorb those duties. This motivational connection provides a strong link between cultivating excellence in production/productivity (*techne*) and what it means to successfully participate in community life – that is, ship life is more pleasant for those that carry their fair share of the load. But this is only the beginning. Practical wisdom itself suggests the ability to mediate between moral virtues in particular situations and coordinating them properly (the right amount in the right way, at the right time) toward virtuous action. Such action, in this case, requires a measure of responsibility. Participants recognize

their social role and fulfill it – and in so doing, they act virtuously applying practical wisdom to a situation demanding (at least) some mix of courage, justice, and friendship.

Other participants highlighted the way ship duties created space for cultivating a richer community experience. Shared responsibilities often led participants into shared experiences that strengthened community bonds and motivated continued engagement with ship duties. *Mary 1996* reflects fondly on her night watch duties noting they compose some of her fondest memories:

> I loved night duty. I loved being up at night and stars and sky. There was one night where the red tide made everything glowy, and we saw a whale outline glowing as it swam by, and dolphins jumping, leaving a stream of phosphorescence. It was like magic. And we would look at each other and ask, "Who sees this?" It was this magical moment, and only a small group of us who got to observe.

For *Erin 2002*, ship duties fostered "unexpected friendships." She identifies two locales as significant for catalyzing her on board relationship building: the "shared experience of dishwashing" with her galley group, and the intimacy of her watch group. Through casual conversation, deliberation, and storytelling, Erin's watch group was able to process the experience together. For her, the people she engaged in these programmatic spaces for relationship building – carved out for the work of ship duties – represent "the people I really got to know – the ones I could rely on." *Samuel 2002* notes, "Work was nonstop – day and night, even at port – and you couldn't get out of what you had to do." Overwhelming as that rhythm was for him at times, *Samuel 2002* concludes, "it was difficult, but it teaches you to be responsible – to yourself and to the whole group."

Collectively, ship duties established a baseline set of community obligations explicit for all participants, defining something like an informal social contract for Class Afloat membership. Those wanting to remain in good standing within the community needed to shoulder their share of the responsibility. In this context the social pressure to participate motivates the practice of regularly fulfilling one's responsibilities. In turn, regular practice leads to habit. As Aristotle (1985) reminds us, practice cultivates habit, and

excellent practice leads us to virtuous action (p. 18-20). Ultimately, excellent practice is guided, in situated contexts, by practical wisdom.

Generally, when we speak of a person as being responsible, we are making a claim about their character – about their capacity for and regular practice of a particular virtue. Similarly, when respondents talk about "becoming responsible" as a result of ship duties, they are making a claim to virtue cultivation. Philosopher Garrath Williams (2008) offers a series of characteristics he identifies as traits expected of a person exhibiting the virtue of responsibility, including reliability, commitment to projects started, initiative, trustworthiness, accountability for actions and omissions, and on (p. 459-462). And these characteristics align with respondent reflections suggesting, at the very least, that mandated participation in structured routine – specifically ship duties – invites participation in the exercise of being responsible such that the virtue is cultivated over time through habituation.

Ship duties, then, appear to offer a learning environment that jointly facilitates habituated practice of responsibility and space for deliberation and social engagement. Most participants suggest that being in this environment did catalyze responsibility or foster its growth in their lives. However, as Aristotle (1985) notes, "one swallow does not make a spring, nor does one day" (p. 9) or for our purposes, one semester or year of practice does not make one responsible. One important indicator of habituation is consistent: ongoing practice. Many respondent stories address the ongoing practice of responsibility in their lives. For instance, *Carter 2011* speaks about the "perspective [he] gained through regular practice – maintaining the boat, setting the table, being efficient and punctual." That perspective, he goes on to say, "has taught [him] to throw in with the team in life after Class Afloat." *Lars 2009* relates his experience of ship duties to "contributing your load in any project." Longer-term reflections affirm the same notion holds beyond just a few years, suggesting that the habits developed on board Class Afloat are perceived to contribute to ongoing development of responsibility in participants' lives – even decades later. *Ashley 2003* notes, "Significant personal growth

happened when I realized what people can actually accomplish in a day." For *Rebecca 1995* the impact appears to be even more pivotal:

> One more year of boarding school and I'd probably be a spoiled rotten little brat like the rest of them…I don't think my work ethic was very good at all. But today, I'm not afraid of work and I'm happier when I'm busy. It's kind of funny, if I don't have a lot [of work] being thrown at me left, right, front, and center, I get bored…I work really well in a high paid stressful environment, so I don't know if I can thank Class Afloat for that, but I think it might have something to do with it.

Not all participants linked their work habits aboard the ship to work habits after. While some respondents did not discuss any long-term impact on their work ethic or ongoing embrace of growing in responsibility, *Jennifer 1999* offers the strongest contrarian perspective saying, "I still appreciate having taken care of the boat, but my life today has no connection to the routines of work I embraced on the ship." Further, this reflection was not constrained by the nature of sailing or ship life – it was supported by multiple life stories recounting behavior that lacked the very constituents of responsibility she affirmed when reflecting on her Class Afloat experience. For examples, she recounts at length life situations she considers to be personal failures where her behavior, from her perspective, specifically lacked things like accountability, trustworthiness, and commitment to finish projects. Whether the habits drifted slowly or were dropped immediately after life aboard the ship is not entirely clear, but the challenging "failures" discussed were largely contained in the last three years – more than a decade after the shipboard experience. Inclusion of Jennifer's reflections echoes Aristotle's (1985) reminder that virtue cultivation takes a lifetime, and the trajectory is rarely straight (p. 8-9).

The social context surrounding Class Afloat ship duties frames responsibility as an other-facing virtue. Thus, exercising the virtue in this context requires and depends on reliability and accountability to shared tasks rather than responsibility to oneself. Respondent stories regarding ship duties do, however, also discuss a sense that more internal personal growth catalyzed during Class Afloat.

Cultivating Discipline

Respondents spoke frequently of a slightly deeper layer – something like self-discipline – that came from their habituated work on board. This theme typically emerged conversationally as participants reflected on how their life today does or does not embody routines of self-discipline. For most respondents transition to life on board was abrupt and disruptive – a connection to both culture shock and transformational learning literature (Allison et al, 2011; Kiely, 2005). Onboard routines and ship duties offered participants structure to facilitate a smoother adjustment to the "disorienting dissonance" experienced by transition to onboard life lead (Mezirow, 2000).

Adjusting to life on board was difficult for many respondents and their cohorts. Stories use phrases like "trust-fund mentality" and "well-to-do" to describe classmates who did not do well transitioning to the challenging work demands of ship life. Respondents also discussed the difficulty of transitioning from "normal" life - which entailed things like stereotypical expressions of North American high school life including sports, homework, and pressure filled social groups – to life onboard Class Afloat. For instance, *Rebecca 1995*, who describes her pre-trip self as "bright, but not achieving [her] potential," speaks to the challenges of transitioning to life onboard Class Afloat – a transition that she says ultimately helped her become a "harder worker." She notes,

> My work ethic changed on Class Afloat. I know I struggled when I first got on there – having to clean all the time, and cook other people's food and wash everyone's dishes, and that maintenance work and stuff, and managing all of that while at the same time doing school work and applying for university and all of that stuff. So definitely, it made my work ethic better. It also made me a more positive person. Optimistic, I guess you could say? Spending less time dwelling on the small and insignificant negative stuff.

Respondents who entered the experience with what they perceived as already high levels of discipline – either as academic or athletic achievers – offered mixed reactions to the experience. For instance, *Jess 2008* brought her background in competitive swimming to the experience, so she had plenty of previous practicing engaging a rigorous schedule

demanding high levels of discipline. Even so, she credits boat life with developing her "grit," saying, "I became a tougher person by pushing myself to meet the demands of ship life. It was exhausting in new ways and for days at a time, and it challenged my mental toughness." *John 2012* expresses enjoying the challenges presented by ship routine and hard work. "I enjoyed the ship work – like learning any new skill, it was an opportunity to grow." Further, John found comfort in them. His background as a competitive skier seems to have normalized both the team approach to challenge and the expectation of rigorous scheduling.

Similarly, *Thomas 1985* remembers joining Class Afloat with a strong sense of self-determination that translated into a disciplined approach to getting things done. However, his personal reflections on experiences prior to boat life suggest more of a mixed bag – at least in the conventional sense. He notes, "I was generally a good kid. I mean sure, I had been kicked out of school a few times – usually suspended for fights – but it was for good stuff, usually trying to set people straight or do the right thing." When it came to attending Class Afloat, pulling together the financial means required discipline. He recalls "hustling to get all the tuition dollars together because [he] had to work for it [himself]." The notion here was clearly one of focused effort to achieve a goal; self-discipline in line with ones values. His perception remains constant, though examples of self-discipline in action seem to increase as he reflects on more recent parts of his life. For instance, *Thomas 1985* recalls:

> Staying awake through watch was difficult, and the daily chores took a significant toll, but by sticking with it I saw the benefits of my own hard work. I've always valued a good work ethic – working smarter not necessarily harder – and I push those values in my own kids.

Today, his own reflections on fatherhood and his unconventional approach to life reflect a strong capacity for and exercise of self-discipline. While *Thomas 1985* does not view Class Afloat as the experience that catalyzed his personal sense of self-discipline, he does view himself "as a collection of [his] own experiences," and he attributes growth in self-discipline – and the associated confidence he gained from seeing what is possible when people "hunker down to achieve" – to his own shipboard experience. Additionally,

the way in which *Thomas 1985* links together his perceptions of life before, during, and after Class Afloat suggests that while he has always valued self-discipline, the virtue developed significantly during the Class Afloat experience and has continued to develop since.

Across respondents, ship duties were also linked to personal and social growth through reflection, shared values, community engagement, levels of confidence, and self-determination. In contrast to other highly structured, full immersion experiences, the Class Afloat environment seems to foster a highly process-oriented, reflective environment. *Kim 2005* considers how ship routines paired with the opportunity for reflection influenced her, saying, "The ship duties are one of the more interesting parts of the trip because you're learning how to do things physically…and it also gives you a time, actually, to just sit out on deck, talk to other people, and to think through your experience." *Kim 2005* goes on to discuss how manual labor tasks, which required a low level of mental engagement, led to significant individual and group processing of the experience. This was especially true for group chores like watch, food prep, and deck work. In contrast to physical challenges like setting rigging and climbing the mast, these activities required less focus on the task at hand and more space for social engagement.

It is important to remember that the requirements of ship life were not optional experiences for participants. In this way they are not voluntary – one of Aristotle's (1985) required stages for the execution of virtuous behavior (NE III.1-4). Even so, the repeated exercise of involuntary ship duties sets a normative pattern for habit formation, which also provided opportunities for reflective practices – individually and in groups – by requiring low mental engagement in the ship duty itself.

For *Ashley 2003*, ship duties were a platform for owning responsibility and then practicing the discipline required to fulfill those responsibilities in a timely manner:

> I was such a procrastinator before I went on the ship, and one of the things Class Afloat did was push me to just get through it and get things done. And especially just being on the boat, you know, where everyday your schedule is so full and you have responsibilities to yourself and to the ship and your crewmates. You

> can't just skip a couple hours of your allotted time for day watch or your allotted time of night watch because you have homework to do – you know, you have responsibilities to this larger body, and it [means] sticking to the schedule, and I think that's probably another example of how this [experience] prepares people for real life in a good way. You know, it takes these students out of their somewhat pampered lives, potentially, and it gives them accountability to other people in this setting where you're actually facing these raw elements in the sea, and safety is actually a concern. I think it just got instilled in me – a sense of getting things done when you have the time to do it and sort of setting it in your schedule – because we had that very strict schedule and those other responsibilities so you kind of had to put yourself on the shelf a little bit.

The social responsibility *Ashley 2003* felt through ship duties translated into increased self-discipline as she fulfilled her duties – and it didn't stop there. What began on board with completed coursework was practiced again to complete college work, and continues today in her working life. *Ashley 2003* believes she was able to transfer her practice of self-discipline beyond the Class Afloat experience. She notes, "Realizing what we could get done is a tool I learned on the boat and have applied in many other settings."

Transferrable practices are a focus of the inquiry, and as detailed above, many respondents (n. 14) agree with *Ashley 2003* – sharing their perception that the Class Afloat experience catalyzed in them a sense of self-discipline and responsibility to contribute to shared goals that they did not have prior to the experience. Equally, many identify later life experiences that have drawn on those traits in ways participants perceive are connected to the Class Afloat experience.

Cultivating *Attentional Flexibility*

Respondents identify the value of work in ways that praise the setting and schedule associated with ship life, though it is doubtful any would have chosen the arrangement at the start. The variety of tasks that balance varying degrees of mental and physical engagement disproportionately allow respondents to shift their attention between different values – perhaps courage and responsibility when climbing rigging for a sailing

maneuver, or friendship and empathy when engaged in conversation during a night watch shift. Additionally, the structure of Class Afloat includes deliberate times for reflection – an opportunity for participants to shift attention again toward a more critical inspection of personal values. Conversation around experiential learning has long highlighted this interplay between experience and reflection (see Dewey, 1938; Joplin, 1995; Brinkmann, 2007). Further, the expression of this interplay is heightened as risk is increased (Allison & Wurdinger, 2005). In the case of Class Afloat, the challenge of physical tasks, the rigorous schedule, and the social pressure of an extended period in a closed environment all increase the felt risk of participation. Tiberius (2008) identifies a reflective virtue associated with shifting perspectives as *attentional flexibility*. It is the ability to hold a particular perspective – be it a practical or reflective – at the appropriate time (Tiberius, 2008, p. 79). Furthermore, Tiberius (2008) identifies *attentional flexibility* as an important constituent of practical wisdom, as a virtue that influences both "reflective wisdom" and "moral wisdom" (p. 7, 16).

While *attentional flexibility* will connect with other themes in this research, it is fitting to introduce it here. Work aboard the ship provides opportunity for varying perspectives – driven by varying scheduled tasks. A person skilled at *attentional flexibility* will be able to engage wholeheartedly in experiences such that their dispositions and emotions are reflective of their values as appropriate to the experience – or what Tiberius (2008) calls practical perspectives. Additionally, attentional flexibility is the ability to step back from experiences at appropriate times and in appropriate ways to adopt what Tiberius (2008) calls a reflective perspective which can evaluate, in a detached way, the alignment between a person's practical perspectives and her stable and justified value commitments (p. 79, 83). For our purposes, Class Afloat (like many experiential learning environments) facilitates the practice of *attentional flexibility*. It does so by exposing participants to various opportunities – adventure, routine, study, and deliberation – which invite individuals to fully engage in the experience, cultivating particular perspectives. Additionally, Class Afloat programmatically arranges those opportunities such that participants have space to process reflectively – both alone and

during informal group deliberation – adopting a reflective perspective that can assess how their engagement with those experiences aligns with their own value commitments.

Ship duties provide a helpful context for varying these perspectives programmatically. For instance, participants are challenged to climb the rigging to complete a sailing maneuver – facing a multitude of fears including heights, failure, and even death – with goals like cultivating courage and self-confidence or feelings of membership and community. Likewise, galley duty becomes a joint expression of responsibility to others and the cultivation of friendship as participants prepare meals while discussing their lives with one another. Though shifts between these activities are not overtly communicated to participants as opportunities to flex their attention from one set of values to another, the perspective shift nonetheless occurs as participants embrace the context or goal of the next activity and its associated emotions. *Erin 2002*, for instance, discussed at length the social bonds that grew from shared experience during galley duty and with her watch groups. These spaces served as catalysts for her, developing compassion and empathy within her friendships. In contrast, she cites the more physical duties – like carrying out difficult ship maneuvers – as pivotal in her ability to "do more than I think I can," and to clarify her understanding of "responsibilities, team, and roles" within the context of ship life. Each of these examples highlights a unique particular perspective surfaced by the varying context of ship duties.

In addition to these practical perspectives, Tiberius (2008) discusses the reflective perspective whereby individuals critically assess their own values and make judgments about the kind of life they want to live. Aboard the ship, the rhythm of work allowed space for deep conversations and life sharing. It seems clear from respondent reflections that activities like night watch were often characterized by a group version of Tiberius' (2008) reflective perspective. The evaluation of one's own values was frequently vetted through group deliberation – messily linked to personal sharing, group processing about the boat experience, and overt values dialogue. *Gary 2008* links his experience to this line of thinking, saying "Today, I think more about *how* I want to live my life, and I owe that to Class Afloat." *Gary 2008* locates this change in watch duty conversations that

fostered deep relationships. It was those relationships that largely challenged his thinking about the kind of person he would become. Thus, group deliberation served as the starting point for *Gary's 2008* reflective perspective.

For *Erin 2002*, the reflective perspective took on a slightly different form – processing the experience occurred largely in private. Admittedly more introverted, she prioritized alone time in spare moments so that she could journal, explaining that "time on my own was essential, and journaling was the best way I found for absorbing the experience, getting it on paper, and starting to make sense of it." For Erin, the enormity of the scheduled experiences generated a felt need to carve time in solitude for cultivating her own reflective perspective. Through independent journaling, she was able to step back from her experiences, absorb them, and begin to evaluate the stability and justification of her value commitments.

In either case, the work duties and schedule of ship life afforded participants with regular practice at *attentional flexibility* – informal training in the ability to align one's dispositions and emotions with the activity at hand, and to take time when appropriate to reflect more critically on one's own values. This is significant given the role critical reflection plays in the development of personal value commitments – particularly for participants during this developmental stage.

Cultivating Self-Determination

The rigorous schedule of work aboard Class Afloat was a central theme that emerged from interview analysis and interpretation. For many participants, the workload was initially overwhelming – a unique mix of learning on the job, working more often than normal, and working harder than normal. Respondents repeatedly referenced the exhaustion brought on by ship duties, particularly during their initial weeks onboard Class Afloat. Additionally, agreement exists across interviews that for respondents, their lives prior to boarding Class Afloat were less physically demanding.

This upturn in physical exertion connects nicely with a neo-Aristotelian understanding of virtue cultivation. Recall that a virtue represents the mean between two vices. For Aristotle (1985) the process of cultivating a particular virtue often involves attempting to act viciously. Aristotle (1985) notes that to reach the mean, we must "drag ourselves in the contrary direction…as they do in straightening bent wood" (p. 29). For example, bravery is the virtuous mean between two vices: cowardice and rashness. For the coward, cultivating courage means behaving in ways that feel and appear to be rash from the coward's perspective – thus bending Aristotle's proverbial wood beyond straight so that when it is released it will be straightened. Similarly, for participants without much experience of hard work or rigorous scheduling, the regular and exhausting practice of ship duties bends their proverbial sticks of self-determination and "grit" beyond the virtuous mean. What seems exhausting at first is normalized as participants successfully carry out their duties regularly over time. Respondents recall feeling initially that the workload was "way too much" though later in the experience respondents express noticing the load less –that level of work normalizes and is viewed as an established routine.

Ship duties placed physical strain – through both difficulty and volume – in ways that were uncomfortable for participants. Thus, the involuntary nature of ship duties aboard Class Afloat creates space for participants to cultivate something like temperance. Forced to engage work rather than indulge the urge to rest, participants repeatedly set aside their own bodily pleasure (in rest) in favor of commitment to the program by participating in ship duties. Over time, this bending beyond temperance raised individual perceptions regarding what constituted a tolerable workload. The result, according to respondents, was an increased threshold for getting things done, and increased insight into the role work plays in sustaining a community – both of which suggest positive personal and social learning in line with developing practical wisdom.

There were exceptions – participants who chose, at least on occasion, to indulge their own urges and forsake responsibilities. *Mary 1996*, for instance, reflects on occasionally sleeping through watch duty or begging friends to take on an extra duty here and there

so she could rest. Trading shifts or finding a substitute for your duties appears to be an accepted part of ship culture. *Lars 2009* shared his willingness to take on shifts for exhausted friends noting:

> I really couldn't get enough of working on the ship – I was open to learning, always volunteering for projects. It was great for my confidence. If someone needed to sleep, I was ready to jump in.

Counterintuitive as it may be, the involuntary practice of work – for those who embraced it – did cultivate a sense of empowerment and confidence associated with respondents' ability to do the impossible. Where it was previously impossible to overcome the desire to halt work, or give up, the context of social pressure and nearly unbearable rigor largely carried participants past their perceived limits. Experiencing this breakthrough engaged participants and increased their own expectations, goals, and boundaries. In addition to confidence in the amount of work one could complete, the particular nature of ship duties cultivated a sense of control in other areas as well. Confidence in the galley, in building new friendships, and in mastery fear to accomplish a task all surfaced in respondent reflections.

Class Afloat participants are placed in a regulative environment – at least in terms of ship duties – that depends on guidance and schedule. According to Roberts & Wood (2007), this regulated environment generates increased autonomy insofar as participants acknowledge and submit to the proper regulation. Someone exhibiting the virtue of autonomy will be both "*properly* regulated by others," and simultaneously will have one's own mind – "being an independent & creative thinker or inquirer" (Roberts & Woods, 2007, p. 260). In this framework, autonomy or self-determination requires at least some element of outside regulation – things like external training, mentoring, and encouragement (Roberts & Wood, 2007). In other words, participant growth in autonomy or self-determination correlates with that participant's willingness to learn. This "regulation by others" seems to occur in a variety of ways including imparted knowledge, critique, modeling, sanctioning, and authorizing (Roberts & Wood, 2007).

Here again, ship duties onboard Class Afloat facilitate a helpful environment for cultivating self-determination albeit with an emphasis on *techne* rather than *phronesis*.

Along these lines, many respondents reference their struggle to learn sailing skills in the early weeks of the experience. Participant learning appears to be largely regulated by instruction and critique as they complete ship duties and sail exercises each day – working toward more challenging sailing maneuvers. *John 2012* expresses his affection for ship work saying, "It's hard to believe how much I learned. I learned to sew. I learned to clean, to organize things, to sail." He attributes his learning to mentorship from the maritime crew – through imparted knowledge, modeling, and sanctioning. *Nate 2009* also identifies the professional crew as instrumental in his development as a sailor – noting regulation by imparted knowledge, modeling, and authorization: "I looked up to their talent and skill, their discipline, their moral integrity. They were the ones with authority on the ship." For *Ashley 2003* the professional crew was "pretty terrifying" and regulation most often felt like critique. *Carter 2011* notes the significance of being affirmed by the captain during a particular night watch, and this regulation by sanctioning literally "en-couraged" *Carter 2011* at a time when his confidence was wanting.

Concluding Thoughts

Discussion of participant growth in autonomy or self-determination – especially alongside the discussion of growth in responsibility, discipline, and *attentional flexibility* – suggests broader connections between the value of work and practical wisdom. Given the age (and life stage) of participants at the time they attended Class Afloat, and early reflections expressed through the interview process, it seems clear (from a neo-Aristotelian perspective) that participants lacked the moral experience necessary to act as virtuous moral agents. And this "lack" or immaturity in respondents regarding moral agency is not blame-worthy; rather it reflects their youth and lack of practice with moral decision-making (Aristotle, 1985, p. 34-36, 66, 167-171). Insofar as moral agency is

within the respondent's control, Tiberius (2008) cites three explanations for a failure to act morally: "bad or insufficiently robust values, bad deliberation, or deliberation that has no effect on action" (p. 163).

Such a conclusion actually serves as a premise for experiences like Class Afloat – an educative program aiming at personal and social development. In particular, it highlights the value of work within the learning experience. As such, achieving the programmatic goal of encouraging self-determination depends largely on helping participants generate more robust values and facilitating space for good deliberation that leads to action (Tiberius, 2008; Aristotle, 1985). Further, if the program is successful in its aim toward personal and social learning, there exists a further expectation that participants will overcome this immaturity, exhibit increasingly robust values, and increasingly practice good deliberation that leads to positive action. While conclusions regarding these measures must be pushed to later chapters, it is interesting to note at this stage that programmatically, ship duties lay what appears to be a useful foundation for the kinds of practices associated with personal and social learning, and practical wisdom.

Participants are challenged to make sense of their own values in the context of the group as they set aside their own urges in favor of completing tasks required by the rigorous schedule. Further, participants engage in deliberation about values and connection to life through casual conversations seeded in less intense work shifts like galley or night watch duties. The rhythm of personal challenge and group processing creates space for participants to refine and clarify their own values as well as practice deliberation. The conclusions of their deliberation – when shared with peers – motivates behavioral change within the context of accountability (identified previously as a constituent of self-discipline). It is from this framework of clarified values and deliberation capable of driving action that self-determination emerges.

Unexpected as it may have been, the structure of ship duties was repeatedly identified as foundational to habit formation. It invited participants into a structured approach to practice with concrete skills and schedules. Additionally, it located scheduled times for

informal conversation and deliberative processing essential to relationship building. The degree of freedom experienced by respondents – in terms of self-determination – correlates closely to respondent willingness to take on certain obligations and practice self-discipline. And this neo-Aristotelian notion appears to be confirmed by respondent reflections. Further, by shifting between periods of experience and critical reflection, participants were afforded time and space to practice values clarification and *attentional flexibility*. Respondent reflections suggest that those who took the opportunity to practice these virtues generated more lasting expressions in their lives after the experience. Collectively, the virtues surfaced by ship duties and schedule helped lay a maturing foundation for subsequent virtue cultivation through the Class Afloat experience.

Chapter 5: Personal Challenges & Growth

Introduction

Experiential learning literature has long identified with developing personal and social growth through challenge. Challenge has served - particularly in outdoor and adventure contexts – as a pedagogical tool used to introduce, catalyze, and cultivate virtues like courage, honor, and compassion (Dewey, 1938; Brinkmann, 2007). Participants are encouraged, through managed risk, to face and overcome their fears by engaging and completing tasks that appear difficult or impossible. There is much discussion in the literature about best practices regarding how to challenge participants, how to manage risk, and how to process and debrief with participants during and following the experience (Allison & Wurdinger, 2005; Joplin, 1995). Collectively, as outlined in chapter 1, there appears to be consensus that personal and social education is accelerated when experiential programs include challenge.

Class Afloat aligns with this broader story-telling – an essential component for a case posing as exemplar. Following the Sail Training International model for Youth Development through Sail Training, Class Afloat includes "challenging, engaging, and genuine activities" (STI Key Practice Area 3). The Class Afloat program invites participants to learn to sail a tall ship and execute a variety of sailing maneuvers, manage a full schedule with difficult ship duties, climb the Main Royale, and explore foreign ports with crewmates. In addition to these programmatic challenges, the tall ship sailing experience also inherently raises additional, contextual challenges. Respondents consistently discussed the challenge presented by discomforts like not feeling well, the pressures of relational proximity, and a general lack of control compared to their life experience prior to boarding the ship.

In both cases – programmatic and contextual – the draw of adventure often elicits fear and discomfort in ways that opportune personal and social education; a claim consistently reinforced by respondent reflections. Interviewees repeatedly acknowledged

notions of fear, discomfort, and challenge presented both through intentionally programmed experiences and context-driven incidental experiences.

This chapter explores the ways respondents remember experiencing fear, discomfort, and anticipation – particularly as it relates to programmatic and incidental challenge – as well as how respondents perceive those experiences fitting into their larger life-story. In exploring participant perceptions, connections are made between respondent stories and the particular virtues that appear to have been catalyzed (and to some degree cultivated) through these experiences: courage, self-awareness, and perspective.

Challenges

For some respondents (n. 6), challenges began before boarding the ship. For instance, *Scott 2011*, whose sibling attended previously, recalls his fears heading into the experience stating, "I was kind of really afraid at first - because I get seasick, horribly, horribly seasick… And all of those small things that make you uncomfortable." Similarly, *Carter 2011* notes that "just applying for the program meant lots of risk," describing himself as "not physically active, timid, anxious, and overwhelmed." *Jennifer 1999* also recalls a variety of fears heading into the experience: "I was scared of sailing, scared of being away – I was a cool kid in high school and going on Class Afloat meant starting over in a lot of ways. I only went because my parents wanted me to go."

In contrast, most respondents (n. 14) remember feeling an overriding sense of adventure before they boarded the ship. For instance, both *Lars 2009* – whose sibling also attended previously – and *John 2012* express little fear or anxiety prior to the trip. Instead, both recall a feeling of anticipation. They each express confident excitement and readiness to make new friends. Participants tend to recall maintaining a largely idealized perception of what life aboard the ship would entail – an expectation which served to bolster the disruption participants felt as they began to realize the gap between expectation and their experience (Mezirow, 2000).

All respondents identified the role that challenge played in their experience. Many, blanketed their reflections with comments linking confidence and challenge. Speaking about the "challenges" of Class Afloat, *Rebecca 1995* notes, "It gave me such a boost in my self-confidence…if you can do that at seventeen, what can't you do?" *Ashley 2003* summarizes, "During Class Afloat I gained confidence by overcoming challenges," a notion she restated three separate times across the interview. *Scott 2011* and *Kim 2005* suggest as much, noting that because of the challenges inherent in the experience, "just stepping on the boat took courage" and "I always think of going on Class Afloat as an act of courage" respectively. Similarly, when comparing her life before and after the experience, *Erin 2002* says, "Class Afloat challenges you and it changes you – boarding school doesn't. Because of my time aboard [Class Afloat] I learned to love challenges in life. Now, I have higher expectations."

In addition to referencing the general notion of "challenge," many respondents also highlight specific elements of the experience that brought out that challenge. Those specific mentions can be loosely arranged into two broad categories – challenges that arose from the context of ship life, and those that were intentionally programmed.

Context-Driven Challenges

One significant factor in the disparity between expectation and reality was the largely underestimated or unanticipated impact of discomfort accompanying life aboard a tall ship. Seasickness, homesickness, the pressures of relational proximity, and a general lack of control seem to collectively displace the romanticized visions of adventure and conquering the open seas held by most participants.

Every respondent identified at least some of these challenges, linking them to varying degrees of fear and discomfort during the Class Afloat experience. *Carter 2011* offers a more severe case, vividly recalling being "plagued by nightmares throughout the semester – of flying ships and being lost at sea." He goes on to say:

> For me, the terror never went away. I lived through it, and I overcame obstacles in spite of it, but the terror was always present. I had lots of fears – being lost at sea, being stranded, falling – it was the stress, work, and constant pressure.

While the cumulative effect of multiple stressors proved to be incredibly difficult for *Carter 2011*, he frames the collective challenge and fear within the context of "expanding my comfort zone" saying, "I think I knew even then that personal growth was happening through the terror."

Many struggled through seasickness during the opening month of their voyage. *Ashley 2003* comments, "I puked a lot at the beginning. It was another thing that I had to get through. It was hell, but then it passed." For *John 2012*, seasickness came compliments of Hurricane Sandy while the crew made their way to Morocco. "As gale storm conditions increased," he notes, "we were all stressed, working hard on the ship, and really sick." Interestingly, *Gary 2009* identifies these discomforts among the most memorable parts of his Class Afloat experience, saying:

> The long hauls, the cold weather, the seasickness, and all that stuff – those are actually some of the most memorable things for me. All the fun things we did in ports were great too, but I think, maybe as I have had other opportunities to travel since, these things are less of the 'highlight reel' for me, if that makes sense.

The most reported context-driven challenges were connected to relational proximity. Not only did nearly every respondent reflect on the social challenges of life aboard Class Afloat, they also linked these social challenges – specifically the challenges relevant to relational proximity – to the role they played in facilitating the development of healthy friendships and community. Respondents repeatedly identify challenges raised by boarding arrangements, on-board cliques, gossip, dating relationships, and general "drama" embedded in the experience. These relational challenges are explored further in Chapter 6.

In addition to these shared stressors and discomforts, participants also encountered contextual stressors unique to their particular cohorts. *Thomas 1985* recounts learning to fight on the streets of Morocco and escaping an East African port by bribing officials

during the inaugural year of Class Afloat. In addition to several challenging white squalls, *Rebecca 1995* discusses running out of food rations two weeks into a thirty-day, trans-Atlantic sail. *Mary 1996* talks at length about how her cohort endured a fatality following an onboard accident at the end of the first semester. Both *Ashley 2003* and *Samuel 2003* share how they unexpectedly spent five weeks in Curaçao after a tugboat hit the Concordia and she was dry-docked for repairs. *Nate 2009* and *Lars 2009* relate how they survived the sinking of the Concordia off the coast of Brazil – an experience that shaped each of them in very different ways. And, as mentioned above, *John 2012* reports on how his crew endured the reach of Hurricane Sandy. In each case, unique stressors added to the challenge of each year's particular experience. Both the unique and shared challenges surfaced repeatedly in respondent accounts. Without prompting, every respondent identified at least one context-driven challenge and connected it to personal learning.

Programmatic Challenges

In addition to context-driven challenges, the programmatic design of Class Afloat incorporates consistent and intentional challenge into the experience. Not surprisingly respondents discussed a variety of challenges built into the program during their interviews. These included sustaining the challenging workload aboard the ship, practicing the execution of unique sailing maneuvers, climbing the Main Royale, and exploring foreign ports. Like their pre-boarding mindset, these programmatic elements elicited fear and excitement from participants as they were challenged beyond their perceived abilities.

A highly scheduled life aboard the ship, as discussed previously, provides participants with a unique opportunity to cultivate concrete work habits. Additionally, participation in sailing maneuvers draws out particular fears in some participants. Interestingly, with only a few exceptions, participants avoided naming the emotions they felt in association with their "difficulties" or "challenges." Instead, they focused on notions of "overcoming" and "persevering." The contexts of these conversations, however,

presume some sense of fear, anxiety, worry, and of being overwhelmed. Between the anxiousness about climbing rigging, and the exhaustion of completing so many tasks each day, the challenge of ship life – through duties and sailing – was significant. Participants repeatedly discussed how these mandatory elements of ship life presented challenges and motivated the persistence required to overcome them. Early in the experience, just showing up for shifts felt impossible to many respondents. *Gary 2008* notes, "For at least those who haven't sailed before, you're very afraid to climb the masts." *Rebecca 1995* remembers:

> There was no rest. There was *no rest*. You were either in class or you were on watch, you were doing galley duty, you were studying. I mean there was just no rest. You slept when you could, when time was available – even if it was only twenty minutes – you took advantage of it. And you just pushed through. You put your boots on and you go to work and you do whatever you can to survive the situation.

Arthur 1999 adds that, "There wasn't really any other option with Class Afloat. You had to do what needed to be done, so you did." Structural and social pressure to persevere through physical and mental challenges led many respondents to a new way of thinking about themselves and their abilities. *Scott 2011*, *Jess 2008*, and *Ashley 2003* offer similar accounts, making connections between the pace and exhaustion they felt and their emerging belief that anything was possible. As *Arthur 1999* states, "When there isn't another option, things that you may not have thought were possible become possible, and I think that really helped me build a lot more confidence." – a sentiment paraphrased by a handful of other respondents (n.6).

Another programmatic challenge respondents identified was climbing the Main Royale. Participants were encouraged to complete this optional challenge, which served as something like a rite of passage for many participants. For some (n. 5), the challenge was included among the most memorable aspects of their experience. This was certainly the case for *Jennifer 1999* who notes, "When my opportunity to climb came, I remember the nerves and anticipation. To feel supported as I climbed, and just to make it – to

actually do it – it felt exhilarating." With a similar sense of accomplishment, *Rebecca 1995* remembers,

> I always had this major fear of heights – I still do – but if you want to go aloft and see the nice view you have to conquer that fear. So I did it, very gradually. It took me 10 ½ months but by the end of the trip I was up, at the top of 120 feet, and I continue to this day to challenge that fear. Up until [Class Afloat] I wouldn't even try to climb a ladder ten feet up.

Carter 2011 identifies climbing the Main Royale as the most pivotal experience of his life:

> It's the number one moment that stands out from my trip – an incredible moment of overcoming fear, feeling accomplished while I was still afraid. I made the first climb with my closest friend. To climb alone was amazing. I remember looking out across the Atlantic – like I was in outer space – and I did it alone. It was terrifying to be at the top, teetering with the rock of the boat. A friend said later that 'climbing the Main Royale was like having your balls on fire and dipping them in ice cream' and I think that captures it – both terrifying and gratifying at the same time.

Carter's 2011 climb up the Main Royale became his personal metaphor for the entire Class Afloat experience. He notes later in the interview that, "the terror never goes away." But *Carter 2011* feels sure that he has grown because he persevered. He is proud of the way his "comfort zone has expanded," and feels experiences like this grew confidence in him that he did not have before.

A final programmatic challenge, identified repeatedly by respondents as having a significant impact on their experience, was exploring foreign ports. Not surprisingly, nearly every respondent (n. 13) specifically highlighted port experiences during interviews. The allure of foreign ports – experiencing cultures, homestays, and engaging different ways of life – ranks high in participant expectations prior to boarding. Additionally, visiting new ports is advertised as a central part of the Class Afloat experience. Port visits mean a lot of different things to different participants: the promise of adventure, loneliness, the chance to see new perspectives, or just an opportunity to take a hot shower. *Lars 2009* identifies port visits as central to helping him develop what he calls a "global perspective." He attaches a personal perspective shift to his time at a

homestay in Istanbul. It was there that *Lars 2009* reports he "started to feel a different sense of gratitude and appreciation," and "saw a change in how I do life." *Erin 2002* reports being fascinated by engaging different cultures throughout the trip. She reflects on the impact of homestays saying, "I still experience a great deal of nostalgia when thinking about Pitcairn Island. It seems strange to have such a longing for a group of people I just met." *Gary 2008* remembers beginning to see the world differently because of the various port experiences on his Class Afloat trip:

> I had gone to all these countries where people were hungry. Maybe I was a little more jaded and cynical after the experience, in a weird way. I remember going to Senegal – Class Afloat still does a two-week program there. And even with that, I feel pangs of guilt about it. The idea is great, but often what we get is a rich white kid scooping up a poor black kid for a photo opportunity and we call it charity. I find myself – not more cynical or jaded – just more skeptical or maybe inquisitive I guess?

Almost across the board, these experiences were highlighted as not just significant, but also representative of an invitation to see a bigger world and imagine living differently in the world because of that shift in perspective. Participants highlight feeling both anticipation and discomfort as they engaged port visits and homestays. The veneer of adventure gives way to fears and discomforts as the largely unrealistic expectations held by participants are met with reality. It is in that disruption that participants seem to acquire a new way of thinking about the world (Mezirow, 2000; Kiely 2005).

Cultivating Courage

In all of these challenges – both contextual and programmatic – participants experience change. Respondents recall beginning to see themselves and the world differently. This section examines how these personal challenges link to neo-Aristotelian ways of thinking about virtues like courage, self-awareness, and perspective.

Respondents identify an increased perceived confidence after facing situations wrought with fear or anxiety as a central theme common to reflections on the challenges they

experienced. Both the programmatic and contextual challenges jointly engage participants in repeated opportunities to face their fears and anxiety. In this way, Class Afloat creates space for participants to practice taking courageous actions by contextually and programmatically introducing these challenges.

Aristotle (1985) defines courage as the virtuous mean navigating feelings of fear and confidence (p. 40-41). Participant perceptions regarding their experience of fear and confidence during Class Afloat suggests something like Aristotelian courage is afoot. Aristotle's (1985) definition of courage seems to contain two dispositions toward fear – courage and caution. Roberts and Wood (2008) draw out this distinction noting that whereas "*courage* is a disposition to mitigate, circumvent, or transcend fears," a second disposition, *caution*, works to "cultivate, refine, and listen to one's fears" (p. 219). Both conceptions seem present in participant perceptions of their own responses to fears surfaced within Class Afloat.

Importantly, the many contextual and programmatic elements require participants to summon courage rather than caution, mitigating or transcending fears rather than listening to them. This is true for nearly all challenges, given their *managed* nature as part of the Class Afloat experience. It is not surprising that program developers would avoid including elements which place participants in situations marked by unmanaged risk, and would alter facets of the program where unmanageable risk surfaces. Participant reflections bare this out with just a few exceptions. As one of these exceptions, *Nate 2009* highlights the "emotionally unsafe" nature of some courses that felt "more like indoctrination to a particular way of thinking than discovery." Similarly, *Rebecca 1995* remembers relationally shifting away from authority figures because of broken trust and significant turnover. Instead, she exhibits something like caution, by seeking support from her peer group instead.

As noted above, the environment aboard Class Afloat is designed to introduce a variety of uncomfortable contextual and programmatic challenges which elicit fear, worry, and anxiety in participants. Before ever boarding the ship participants must reconcile their

own expectations with the unknown. Once on board, participants are required to adjust those expectations as they face the realities of ship life. Oft-unexpected discomforts like exhaustion and sickness seed doubt in participants regarding their own fitness to complete the adventure, to survive, or to succeed. Multiple participants reflect on achieving what seemed impossible, and in those reflections they reveal the inherent concern that challenges were, in fact, too much to bear. Across interviews, a pattern emerges. Consistently, respondents identify as most memorable those moments aboard Class Afloat where confidence reigns over fear. Simply facing the unbearable and persevering to the point of achieving is perceived as an act of courage. And practicing even small acts of courage – e.g. filling in for night watch, extending relationship to a new classmate, preparing meals for the first time – fosters the sense that one can overcome. In each act of courage, the disposition to master fear grows.

Further, as Aristotle (1985) notes, "Experience about a given situation also seems to be bravery" (p. 42). On this view, Aristotle suggests that courageous acts are still courageous – even when repeated success greatly reduces or removes the felt fear. Contrary to *Carter 2011*, whose terror never waned, time and repeated practice helped many participants become both increasingly experienced and less afraid of tasks that once scared them. The repetition of similar courageous acts in similar contexts by a participant appears to alter the amount of fear associated with that particular activity. Thus, more experienced participants need to overcome less fear when applying their more experienced disposition of courage to particular situations. Since their confidence comes from a history of acting courageously, Aristotle (1985) suggests we are right to continue considering these participants brave.

For example, *John 2012* and *Gary 2008*, both discuss the fear associated with climbing rigging during sailing maneuvers. We are right to consider each act of climbing the rigging an act of bravery – they are overcoming fear for the sake of the crew, to accomplish an end that is worthy, sailing the ship across the sea. We call them courageous because they transcend their fear to climb. Across months of sailing, the fear associated with climbing the rigging decreased for both participants. By year's end,

climbing rigging was part of life aboard the ship and doing so hardly required "overcoming fear." What had seemed scary early on was largely normalized through scheduled practice across the Class Afloat experience. On Aristotle's (1985) view however, they do not cease to be called brave for climbing the rigging. Their experience has already secured the virtuous label – they are brave because of the history of brave acts that led to *John 2012* and *Gary's 2008* current level of confidence. As the fear associated with a courageous act lessens, it seems that the associated boost in confidence also lessens for that particular act. For *John 2012* and *Gary 2008*, climbing rigging was no longer scary, so the self-perception that climbing the rigging was an act of courage began to diminish relative to how it was perceived earlier in the trip.

Similarly, a perceived lack of control, relational proximity, and port visits were overcome through acts of courage. Participants repeatedly reflect on rallying their own physical, mental, and emotional energy to persevere through discomfort and fear. Through these acts of courage the seemingly impossible becomes possible. *Scott's 2011* lack of control aboard the ship is overcome as he learns to push through his own exhaustion and to "throw in" with the rest of the crew. *Erin 2002* exhibits courage as she mitigates the "overwhelming challenge" of "learning to live together in small spaces" and acquires what she calls a "perspective shift" reporting that in the end "small becomes enough."

For others, fear did not lessen over time. The fear *Carter 2011* and *Rebecca 1995* associate with climbing rigging, given their ongoing fear of heights through the entirety of their Class Afloat experience, was never perceived as lessening. In spite of persistent fear, both found ways to mitigate fear and overcome. Both suggest that the process produced increased confidence. *Rebecca 1995* notes:

> It gave me a lot of self-confidence. So, things like, I can sail a boat, you know? I can help out. I can go aloft and I can fix that sail or I can rust-bust this. I mean, [being] put in situations and doing things that you've never done before, and kind of testing your limits a little bit within yourself. So giving you that confidence. Definitely trying things that you've never tried before. Class Afloat was all about that. If it was swimming with sharks or jumping off a cliff into the

> ocean, or I don't know, the experiences are endless. You just find yourself in all these situations you wouldn't normally find yourself in, in the real world.

The combination of unknown, new, and intimidating experiences available through her time aboard Class Afloat gave *Rebecca 1995* opportunities to practice courage in a variety of circumstances. The result, by her perception, is an increase in self-confidence that translated to life beyond the ship. She goes on to say, "Class Afloat opened so many doors for me. It boosted my self-confidence and that allowed me the confidence to go on to do so many other things." And summarily, she notes, "If you can do that at 17, what can't you do?"

Along similar lines, *Nate 2009* reflects on the challenges he faced noting that "overcoming obstacles is an opportunity for growth, and the most challenging are the most defining." While trying to make sense of what she meant by personal growth, *Ashley 2003* reflects:

> It was the confidence I gained from that experience… confidence gained from all the types of things we did through that program showed me what we were capable of as individuals, and that lent a new confidence to my life and the way I approached things, and what I went after… It stopped me from limiting myself, what I could achieve.

As *Ashley 2003* goes on, she notes how this confidence extends beyond the ship, empowering her in "forming new relationships, visiting a new place, going to school, applying for jobs, or approaching any social setting." Not insignificantly, *Ashley's 2003* courage to engage life aboard the ship – with all its contextual and programmatic challenges – cultivated confidence to continue being courageous in areas of life disconnected from ship routines and practices.

Courage transferred beyond the boat for *Kim 2005* too:

> I always think of going on Class Afloat as an act of courage, and I look to that a lot. I think I'm more aware of it now because it's a little bit natural that as you get older you have more things to think about [regarding the] impact a particular decision would have. If I'm ever having a hard time and feeling like I'm worrying too much, I think, 'You know what, I was able to be brave when I was

> younger, so I should do that now too,' and not allow myself to get too shy or scared about different decisions.

Like so many of the respondents, the challenge of her Class Afloat experience gave *Kim 2005* opportunities to be brave. Through these opportunities, participants practiced courage. Overcoming fear with confidence became a habit that participants were invited to practice through the context and program of Class Afloat. Brave acts, over the course of the experience, became normalized leading to a new way of thinking about what was and was not possible. The result, for *Kim 2005* and others, was a new confidence that transferred beyond the boat experience. Overcoming fear with confidence was a new way of being – virtue appeared to be cementing.

Cultivating Self-Awareness

Facing and successfully engaging their fears, or cultivating courage, participants seem to start seeing themselves in a new light. In a way, the challenges of ship life point fingers at participants, highlighting potential deficiencies and encouraging them to self-identify differently. The contextual and programmatic elements of ship life seem to push participants to new limits, encourage them to break through, and in so doing invite them to know themselves differently.

Tiberius (2008) identifies a reflective virtue along these lines that she calls moderate self-awareness (p. 19). For Tiberius (2008), this is a somewhat complex disposition. For instance, a person must have adequate self-knowledge, but also a certain measure of positive illusions (p. 111-113). Positive illusions can serve us by providing unwarranted optimism in the face of challenge, and thereby allow us to achieve more than we would otherwise. Additionally, to be moderately self-aware, a person must practice the requisite skills for "the process of constructing a self-conception and integrating it into one's practical life" (p. 121). In the context of learning experiences, this notion of the ongoing construction of one's self-conception fits nicely with Dewey's (1938) principles of interaction and continuity. Experiences move participants, and self-awareness is the

disposition that empowers them to reflect rightly on their transformation, helping participants keep their self-conception in line with long-term value commitments.

As D'Amato and Krasny (2011) note in their outdoor adventure study, "breaking with normal life" disrupts participants' self-understanding leading to "critical self-reflection," and for more than half the participants, "new feelings about their strength as individuals" (p. 245). Furthermore, their study identified a second theme – "dealing with intensity and challenge" – noting that success through challenges "led [participants] to feelings of achievement and provided opportunities for participants to gain competence and self-confidence through [practice]" (D'Amato & Krasny, 2011, p. 246).

The shift in personal identity relative to increased self-confidence highlighted by D'Amato and Krasny (2011) mirrors Class Afloat participant reflections. Across respondents, reflection on changes in personal identity occurring during the Class Afloat experience fell broadly into two camps – sensing an invitation to a different way of doing life, and sensing a deeper understanding of the self because they stepped on board.

Reflections that highlight an invitation to a different way of doing life emphasize the central role played by challenges within the Class Afloat experience, in terms of generating a participant transformation. For instance, many identified the perceived impact as significant to their capacity for recognizing personal growth. *Scott 2011* notes that for him Class Afloat was "Not so much a new beginning, but another level – an accelerating level in life," one that took him to a deeper self-understanding in terms of identifying and connecting with the values he wanted to pursue in life. Similarly, *Ashley 2003* calls Class Afloat "an incubator for my experiences since; a kind of exploration that gets built into you." In both cases, participants link the self-awareness discovered during Class Afloat to later recognitions of growth in life.

For others, self-awareness looked more like self-knowledge. *Carter 2011* reflects, "Class Afloat was a medium to learn about myself." *Nate 2009* notes, "Class Afloat helped me find a better me." More summarily, *Arthur 1999* remembers, "I really came out of my

shell with a new sense of self – taking more risk believing it would work. That shaped a belief in me that nothing is out of reach."

One challenge to cultivating moderate self-awareness is our own unintentional hiddenness through self-deception and rationalization (Tiberius, 2008). *Jess 2008* recalls her own reflectiveness during Class Afloat. She remembers beginning to think about herself abstractly, detaching from the emotional volatility she felt. She notes, "I gained self-knowledge *from* Class Afloat, but not *during* it. I was too wrapped up in my own loneliness. It was a turbulent time, and it wasn't until I was home again that I was able to reflect on the experience."

In her analysis of self-awareness, Tiberius (2008) prescribes habits and skills that are "self-consciously critical and reflective" (p. 126) – exercises like temporarily taking up "the perspective of an outside observer," being open to the insights of others who know us well, and a willingness to let "hidden desires, beliefs, and emotional responses" come to the surface (p. 121-122). In this regard, the environment of ship life is particularly conducive to fostering self-awareness. As noted previously, the work schedule on board creates opportunity to practice *attentional flexibility*. Participants practice adopting varying practical perspectives as they shift roles on board (e.g. a conversational night watch versus a physically strenuous maintenance shift). In addition to these practical perspectives, participants are invited to practice a reflective perspective through group deliberation, occasional downtime, and processing or debriefing. Furthermore, the "efficient self-awareness" Tiberius (2008) has in mind helps participants ensure they "avoid unhelpful self-absorption and wasteful over analysis" (Thorburn & Horrell, 2014, p. 628). The demanding schedule of Class Afloat, it seems, contextually and programmatically guards participants against both of these vicious alternatives.

More broadly, reflective pauses from the bustle of activity – comprised largely of contextual and programmatic challenge – allow participants to practice reflecting on their own values in light of their experience. Class Afloat accelerates the practice of these reflective virtues for participants largely because contextual and programmatic

aspects of the journey offer so many unique experiences in such a short period of time. For participants, there is much more to process during Class Afloat than they could imagine experiencing in a similar timeframe prior to boarding. More experience provides greater opportunity for practice – and subsequently transformative personal growth. According to respondents, the accelerated context also presents participants with more confusion around identity related questions. Confusion, in turn, challenges participants to process, and in doing so, they exercise the disposition of moderate self-awareness.

Not surprisingly, most respondents express something like self-awareness regarding personal growth in their reflections on Class Afloat. Many participants linked their Class Afloat experience to "growing up," suggesting the experience catalyzed or accelerated something that was going to happen anyway. For instance, *Gary 2008* notes, "I have a more mature perspective now. I think more about how I want to live my life because of [the boat]." When asked to reflect on what life might be like had he not participated in Class Afloat, *Lars 2009* notes, "I'd be much less comfortable in my own skin." He added later that Class Afloat "totally changed me and who I'm striving to become." Similarly, both *Jennifer 1999* and *Rebecca 1995* use the phrase, "I found myself" when discussing the role Class Afloat played in their lives, and *Mary 1996* says, Class Afloat "left me looking to make more of my life."

Reflecting on where his newfound confidence took him, *Thomas 1985* links courage to self-awareness when he notes, "Class Afloat gave me the confidence to be unconventional." *Thomas 1985* returned home and learned to fly instead of heading to college. He is now an entrepreneur with several successful ventures. He believes Class Afloat empowered him to act on his imagination and creativity.

Cultivating Perspective

By acts of courage, participants gain confidence. Accelerated experience leads to an accelerated growth in self-confidence. Accelerated self-confidence leads participants to

a different understanding of themselves– they begin reflecting on newly identified capacities and accomplishments generating a stronger and more courageous self, solidified by moderate self-awareness.

Alongside the cultivation of these virtues, Tiberius (2008) identifies another reflective virtue, which she calls perspective. Whereas the disposition of self-awareness illuminates a clearer sense of oneself and the values one holds, the disposition of perspective helps one maintain a long view of the values worth pursuing, drawing one's reason, emotion, and action into line with those values (Tiberius, 2008). Significant here, is the integration of one's emotions into this longer view. As Küpers and Statler (2008) note, "emotions regulate human perceptions" and "inform us about our attitudes and expectations as well as about possible actions." (p. 383). The array of contextual and programmatic challenges generating emotional dissonance for participants generates a unique reflective challenge of weighing that dissonance against the shifting sand of long-term values – as participants are re-assessing the kinds of lives they desire to pursue.

Equally, Cleland's (2002) previous study of Class Afloat participants identifies "novel experiences" as the single most important contributor to personal growth (p. 89), and he draws connections between this kind of personal growth and the unique global learning that occurs during the Class Afloat voyage (p. 90). Both these learning outcomes suggest engagement with a broadened base of unique experiences, increasing the scope of possible experiences, value commitments, and ways to live.

For Class Afloat participants, the process of identifying what values to pursue is ongoing. The experience itself occurs during a season in life when participants are naturally asking significant metaphysical questions and redrawing their mental maps to accommodate. Undoubtedly participants arrive with a set of values, and throughout their experience participants find their values challenged. New information and new experience regarding the world and themselves leads to changes in the kinds of values participants want to pursue and/or the intention associated with pursuing those values.

As Tiberius (2008) puts it, perspective is about seeing one's own commitments rightly – having "the right dispositions of thought, feelings, and action in the right strength" – and "taking our commitments to be no more or less important than they really are" in light of our broader understanding of others and our world (p. 93).

Some participants perceive this change in perspective as a paradigm shift. *Nate 2011* notes, "The experience was like a slingshot. I turned a corner and shot forward in an entirely new direction." Similarly, *Mary 1996* remembers:

> Class Afloat as a whole was a very transformative experience, and I think it was because of how all the pieces came together rather than a pinpoint life changing moment. I've had a lot of amazing experiences in my life. I would say a lot of life changing events, but I've only had three transformative events, and Class Afloat is one of them. Class Afloat really gave me a new paradigm.

For *Mary 1996* the collection of challenges and experiences transformed how she thought about herself and her world. So much so that she elevates the experience alongside two other transformative, paradigm shifting events in her life: her divorce and the birth of her daughter. The experience largely reframed the kind of world *Mary 1996* knew, and in doing so, allowed her to see both herself and the world differently.

Gary 2009 also experienced a paradigm shift through port visits and engaging different cultures. He notes, "I never thought exposure to poverty would be a challenge, but it was… [I became] more aware of the complexities of global inequalities and how the world works." Later in the interview he continues, "Obviously it was a huge, huge turning point in my life. I'm more open now to different thinking and to different experiences."

For others, spatial perspective translated into relational and challenge related growth in perspective. *Erin 2002* reflects, "When you live on a boat your perspective shifts – small becomes enough. That hasn't left me." She goes on to add, "I figured out what I wanted – to pursue challenges in life, to have broader, bigger expectations." Similarly, *Kim 2005* recalls "noticing how large the world is when you are traveling by ship, because it's taking you a huge period of time to get from point A to point B. " Kim goes on to reflect

on the authenticity she felt traveling by ship and the connection she had to geography because of that mode of travel. Fresh geographic perspective led Kim to consider the value of her "contribution" to ship duties in a new light, noting "It's a good example for young people – making a contribution." For Kim, perspective helps connect the size of the world to the challenge of sailing a ship and the significance of each worker along the way. The result is a new or strengthened commitment to the value of throwing in with the team.

On Tiberius's (2008) account, the virtue of perspective allows a person to learn from experience and remain aware of what is truly important (p. 108). Doing so requires two skills: a measure of sympathy, and the ability to live out one's values (p. 101). Again, the contextual and programmatic elements of Class Afloat seem to generate opportunities to practice each of these skills. While the former will be addressed more fully in the next chapter, it is clear that through relationship building, respondents grew in their ability to see the world from another's perspective – evidence of the capacity for minimal sympathy.

Regarding the ability to live out one's values, it seems this capacity is at least somewhat catalyzed during the Class Afloat experience. However, both context and program delimit the range by which participants might explore living out their own values; that is, life on board offers participants a uniquely narrowed range of opportunity for expressing values. Said another way, the experience introduces participants a new field of possible value commitments – broadening proverbial horizons – while also prioritizing particular values, specifically those central to the general culture of Class Afloat and particular culture of a given cohort.

Further, participant cultivation of perspective does not seem to occur through linear growth. As Chapter 8 will discuss further, the accelerated perspective afforded by the experience aboard Class Afloat leads, in many cases, to something like pretentiousness or arrogance that hinders minimal sympathy. It is only over time that some participants shift back from arrogance to an openness characteristic of minimal sympathy.

Concluding Thoughts

Interestingly, there is another virtue that emerges where courage, self-awareness, and perspective intersect: humility. After pages defining humility by contrasting it to opposed vices, Roberts and Wood (2007) suggest it is a virtue that "is internally connected with other virtues," at least one of which is "self-confidence" (p. 255-256). Further, in a strange way, opportunities for self-confidence can strengthen a willing disposition toward humility, since the humble person will be open to understanding themselves in a new light, and will be prone to see those possibilities as open to others rather than seeing themselves as earning some entitlement by their successes. In the context of Class Afloat, students participating together, relating together, and reflecting together have an opportunity to cultivate humility together as they see one another achieving success over fear, identifying values, and accepting broader perspectives.

If courage and the associated self-confidence, self-awareness, and perspective are catalyzed by the Class Afloat experience, we can expect to see participants exhibiting this posture of humility. At the very least, we can say that the openness required by perspective – to see things from another's vantage and consider the other's perspective to be as valid as one's own – will look a lot like humility. Additionally, exhibiting such openness would require a measure of vulnerability – requiring enough courage, self-confidence, and self-awareness to overcome fears associated with rejection and the possibility of having to reevaluate one's own perspective. Here too, respondents perceive themselves as growing in humility.

Perhaps locating the presence of these virtues within the Class Afloat experience is not surprising, given the stage of life participants are in. When asked to imagine how life might have been different had they not participated in Class Afloat, *Jess 2008* and *Arthur 1999* suggest the changes they experienced may have happened anyway – part of the stage in life they were experiencing more than the context and program aboard the ship. As *Gary 2008* notes, "There is a limited timeframe where you can do these sorts of

things [like Class Afloat] and they still have resonance" given the reduced commitments young people have, and the unique openness to different ways of thinking that characterize that stage in life.

However, even if these changes are linked to life stage, it is interesting to notice the accelerated nature of experience and practice embedded in the contextual and programmatic challenges engaged during the Class Afloat experience. Following Aristotle (1985), virtues are largely cultivated through habitual practice, and the environment presented by Class Afloat provides just that – opportunity to repeatedly practice acting brave, to consider one's own capabilities and values, and to identify ways to think, feel, and act that are in line with those values. Confidence is more than a byproduct because it stimulates both self-awareness and perspective.

Participants, as noted, return from their Class Afloat experience changed. They are (albeit in varying degrees) more courageous facing fears, more confident in what they can achieve, more settled in their convictions, and more capable of living them out. Returning to Aristotle's (1985) assertion that flourishing is measured over a lifetime, it remains to be seen how the onboard challenges and associated learning link to participant experiences beyond Class Afloat (chapters 7 and 8).

In addition to personal growth, participants reflected on the social challenges Class Afloat presented them and the growth they perceive from those challenges. This is the content of the next chapter.

Chapter 6: Social Challenges & Growth

Introduction

In addition to the contextual and programmatic challenges examined in chapter 5, respondent stories highlight a variety of social challenges inherent in leaving their home context, boarding the ship, and sailing the globe. This chapter explores respondent perceptions surrounding the collection of experiences moving participants from social isolation to fit within a newly formed community[6]. Additionally, it seeks to understand when and how friendships and community do and do not form, to make sense of how respondents perceive the on-board friendships and community they developed aboard Class Afloat as they gain distance from the experience, and to assess whether these experiences contribute to perceived participant growth in practical wisdom – particularly insofar as friendship acts as an incubator for Aristotelian style personal and social education. Following this brief introduction, contextualizing the place of social bonds within experiential learning and sail training in particular, this chapter will trace themes of respondent perceptions as they reflect on the development of social bonds during the Class Afloat experience: loneliness and social pressure, shared space, shared program and context, and shared experience. Then, the chapter explores connections between these story-informed social transitions and neo-Aristotelian notions of friendship and community, suggesting how the two might overlay and highlighting practices relevant for cultivating friendship, community, and practical wisdom (particularly insofar as its exercise depends on social relationships).

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[1] Using the term community – particularly in this chapter – presents several challenges. Use of the term within past participant stories suggest at least three distinct varieties: a) a casual sense, descriptive of the camaraderie aboard the ship; b) an objective of onboard programming; and c) an ideal considered, not uniformly experienced, and in some cases experienced as oppressive, though contributive to genuine relationship. Within the chapter's final section I attempt to clarify these varying uses definitionally. In addition, these varying uses of the term "community" raises an inherent tension within experiential learning theory – that ideal notions of community can conflict with how community is actually constructed and experienced by people. (See also Young, 1986.)

As outlined in Chapter 1, experiential learning literature suggests that experiential learning in general and personal and social education in particular are designed to intentionally foster meaningful engagement with others. Designed social engagement around problem solving and deliberation will, theoretically, characterize student to student and educator to student relationships for even short experiences like a classroom walk in the woods. This expectation for experiential learning in general holds in the particular for sail training as well, so it is no great insight that participants engaged in a semester or year-long sailing voyage generated social bonds along the lines of community.

It is no surprise, then, to learn that extended experiences like Class Afloat would cultivate something like community. Inherently programs like this offer little space for physical isolation and maintain programmatic structures that engage participants collectively in cooperative work. This context provides rich soil for social engagement. In fact, Sail Training International's youth development model (2010), devotes one of its four "practice areas" to "meaningful opportunities for membership, community and partnership in a group." The practice area is broken into three principles: "2.1 Sail training activities create and contribute to the on board 'community,' 2.2 Trainees have opportunities to take on different roles and exhibit leadership behavior, and 2.3 Trainees develop an understanding of individual contributions to effective team work.

In addition to these student-to-student community principles, the youth development model highlights the teacher-student relationship in a separate practice area devoted to "supportive interactions with others and modeling of good behavior." Specifically, in Principle 1.2, it is noted that, "Responsible behavior is modeled and facilitated by program staff." Further connections to the obligations associated with appropriate social relationships are evident in several other principles across the youth development model. For instance, the model makes reference to creating a psychologically safe environment for learning, and elsewhere notes that trainees are involved in and accountable for decision-making and problem solving. Each of these connects to the kinds of responsibilities we tend to expect individuals will have to the group within a community

– especially in experiential learning environments. In this regard, the Class Afloat experience can be expected to exhibit what is suggested by experiential learning literature and Sail Training International's youth development recommendations.

For Class Afloat, the development of social bonds – both friendships and community – are perhaps unavoidable. *Gary 2008* reflects:

> CA is a very rare environment where the niceties go by the wayside – it's a very adult world in that sense. It's the same way there is a certain casualness that you have with family around your home. You can enjoy silences with people and not feel like you have to chat all the time or have your best face on."

Confirming expectations, respondents repeatedly reference social bonds and community obligations through the questionnaire and interviews. While it is not particularly insightful to declare that this sort of experience helps develop friendships, understanding *how* the bonds of friendship and community come to be may serve to improve program planning and resource allocation on other sail training experiences and within experiential learning settings more generally. Identifying the practices common to respondents who express success building friendships and community on board Class Afloat will also shed light on the kinds of habits and skills associated with living well with others.

Loneliness & Social Pressure

Respondent reflections around the social pressures faced – especially before boarding and in the early weeks – tend to take one of three forms: those who were anxious or afraid prior to boarding, those who discussed a mix of excitement and anxiety as they struggled to adapt to ship life, and those who were excited and adapted quickly to their new social environment.

Six respondents report significant social anxiety prior to boarding. *Scott 2011*, as noted in Chapter 5, identifies a variety of pre-boarding fears. Closing out those reflections he states:

> It was really frightening having to live with a whole bunch of people [when] you have no clue who they are, or what they'll do to you, and having to deal with those things around all those people I didn't even know. It was more the social aspect that would stress me out the most. Ship duties and sailing I could learn, but the aspect of who you are – and expectations around that – [was] probably more stressful than it ought to have been.

Similarly, *Arthur 1999* expresses social anxiety around the impending association with unknown people. He notes that having never experienced an adventure like Class Afloat on his own before, he was "scared of joining a bunch of strangers." *Jess 2008* was leaving an unsettling season of life where meaningful friendships had been hard to come by. She states, "I was interested in meeting new people, but I was nervous. I wanted to make a certain kind of friendship – one I hadn't been able to make at school." The prospect of making new friendships was simultaneously exciting and scary. *Ashley 2003* recalls being anxious:

> I was nervous about being put in a whole new group of people – and what that would be like socially. What will people be like? Will I make friends? Socially I had a lot of good friends, especially close friends, but was still kind of shy and I would get nervous and anxious about things – I was a bit of a perfectionist and making friends on the boat was going to be way out of my control.

These reports of social anxiety prior to boarding raise several interesting insights. For instance, all six of these respondents chose to attend the Class Afloat experience in spite of their fears. Several indicate choosing to endure the social challenge because the value of the sailing experience outweighed their social fears. Others, however, specifically mentioned their hope that a setting like Class Afloat would alter how they engage socially – that is, these participants identified their social fears and made a clear choice to face them head on through Class Afloat. This is especially true for *Carter 2011*. He recalls battling significant social anxiety prior to boarding and self-identifies as a "pretty withdrawn student, lonely, who didn't really socialize much at all." *Carter 2011* goes on to say, "I was timid, anxious, overwhelmed, and lost in thought, but Class Afloat was worth the risk. I had an excitement about living on a ship and I wanted to break out of my shell. Class Afloat had that potential payoff."

Erin 2002 reflects similarly. Prior to boarding she was nervous about building new relationships on the boat. She notes, "The prospect – and then reality –of new relationships and close proximity to others was overwhelming." In spite of that pressure, she identifies the first week or two as an "exciting start – getting to know the crew, learning people's stories, and sharing in all kinds of discussions." For Erin, adapting to ship life was simultaneously exciting and overwhelming.

In contrast, *Jennifer 1999* expressed not being anxious prior to boarding, though she recalls being "very uncomfortable on her first day" aboard Class Afloat. She highlights significant social disruptions she faced immediately, noting that she was "stuck on the bottom bunk," "labeled a bitch," and being "unknown." Having been a "cool kid" in her high school setting with "lots of confidence," Jennifer's new setting felt incredibly tumultuous. For Jennifer, the experience was reported as three distinct phases – pre-boarding excitement, a difficult and painful first two weeks, and rich year of close friendships thereafter.

More often than not, respondents identified with feeling lonely at the start of the journey. Drawing from the work of philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer, Walter Brogan (2002) notes that loneliness – "the experience of being away from one's community" – is "the very site from which friendship and community arises" (p. 151). Loneliness contributes to an "intense experience of absence" which accounts for "the very *possibility of community*" (Brogan, 2002, p. 152).

In contrast to stories highlighting loneliness and social pressure, many respondents report embracing the challenge of building community with excitement – absent any mention of social challenge or anxiety. Both *Lars 2009* and *John 2012* express this kind of confident excitement and willingness to make new friends. *Lars' 2009* expectations had the advantage of insight from an older sibling who participated. He admits being "shy in new groups," but remembers viewing the Class Afloat experience as "an adventure that was sure to be full of new friendships." *John 2012* remembers himself as

a "community builder," noting that in those early days, "awkwardness is your friend and honesty grows out of it."

Shared Space

As discussed in Chapter 5, there were significant social challenges presented by the context of the Class Afloat experience. Many of these challenges are linked to the relational proximity inherent in an ocean voyage. Nearly every respondent (n. 14) discussed the challenges of living in close proximity to their crewmates for an extended period of time. For *Arthur 1999*, who was admittedly introverted, having other people around all the time was a significant challenge:

> Being stuck on the boat with fifty other people made it really, well, you had to get along and deal with people personally. I did struggle with being so closely tied to people at all times – except for maybe night watch – and I think that was probably the biggest challenge for me, just dealing with people, and it was probably where I grew the most. It was really memorable, and it did change me a lot – made me quite a bit more social.

Similarly introverted, *Simon 2002* recalls taking on the challenge of making new friends: "being close together forced interaction, and I started to make unexpected friendships. For the first time in my life I was friends with confident and popular people, [and] for the first time I had female friends." But the challenge wasn't limited to self-professed introverts. *Scott 2011* recalls many "frustrating social interactions," often leaving him "feeling trapped and misunderstood" but he adds that less space "forces people to open up." *Lars 2009* notes that while "it sometimes felt like Utopia on the ship," the tight proximity meant "working through lots of drama." For *Gary 2008*, being "trapped with a range of people" was "great but terrible" since life aboard meant maintaining relationships with "a fun but challenging mix" of introverts and extroverts.

For some, the relational dynamics aboard the ship felt exclusive and cliquish, mirroring previous secondary school experiences. This was certainly true for *Jess 2008* who recalls befriending a particularly challenging individual and frequently pairing up with her for port visits. Because no one else wanted to be with her friend, the two of them were often

left out. *Jennifer 1999* also experienced cliques, but felt they disappeared quickly: "I felt very uncomfortable on the first day. I was labeled as 'bitch' by my roommates and stuck on the bottom bunk."

For others, the limited space of life on a tall ship presented awkward relational challenges around issues like hygiene, organization of personal space, and privacy. *John 2012* identifies dealing with relational tension as a "significant moment on the trip" for him as he found himself trying to come up with a kind way to communicate with a roommate about "terrible body odor and smelly feet." *Gary 2008* recalls "lots of testosterone" in his 9-man cabin, adding, "With two-thirds of the crew being male, the year was a bit Lord of the Flies." Going on, he notes:

> It's a completely different spin on things, compared to high school, when you are living with the people and are at work with them – and it's such a long program. For some of us it was a fast track into adulthood because you find the persona that suits you – helps you get by day to day and get along with others.

At times, respondents recall these relational challenges escalating beyond division and cliques to verbal and even physical altercations. For instance, *John 2012* and *Carter 2011* both share stories of exhaustion on night watch leading to scuffles. Remembering similar situations, *Rebecca 1995* quips "You're stuck on a three-hundred foot boat for long periods of time. You learn how to keep the peace with people who aren't your cup-of-tea."

Interestingly, like Arthur's quote above, nearly every respondent (n. 16) also discusses the connection between the challenge of relational proximity in ship-life and the role it played in facilitating the development of healthy friendships and community. Collectively, these reflections highlight the important roles played by isolation from previous relationships and proximity to people insofar as they seed the soil for friendship and community building on board Class Afloat. Drawing from Aristotelian notions of friendship and virtue cultivation, Kristjan Kristjansson (2014) writes, "the medium…in friendship is thus *dialogue* between the friends in which they throw themselves into challenging conversations n order to help each other see more ample and appropriate ways of being, feeling, and acting." Likewise, *Simon 2002* connects the challenges of

relational proximity to his own personal growth in relationship building and conflict resolution. He notes:

> Being so close forced us to interact – forced me to talk with people I wouldn't normally engage. It was the first time in my life I had female friends. I learned to respect people's space. We literally did everything together, so we learned to either get along better or ignore the little things that bothered us. It was overall much more positive than negative.

Erin 2002 includes "learning to live together in small spaces" within her list of "overwhelming challenges" on the boat. For her, the tight quarters also provided a venue for authenticity and vulnerability in relationship. In spite of the challenge, she reflects, "strong friendships flourished because you were exposed – there was no hiding. You saw people for who they were right from the start. It was really the small space that catalyzed an openness to others in me." Similarly, *Nate 2009* tells the story of a girl he found crying, trying to hide on deck. "We talked, and I got to sit with her. We became really close friends – still to this day." He goes on:

> Because of the shared space onboard, it was easy to find things in common with people. There was a breach of social expectations – the ship removed social boundaries between different students. Labels like jocks, nerds, and popular were largely removed or ignored."

Having been labeled a bitch on day one, *Jennifer 1999* remembers, "Two weeks later we were getting along – we had connected. By the end of the semester I had life-changing friendships – people I loved." As Jennifer understands it, being stuck in that bottom bunk and surrounded by roommates that disliked her transitioned from challenge to opportunity in just a few weeks, and ultimately unlocked relational depth she had not previously experienced. Interestingly, Aristotle (1985) affirms this particular expression of friendship noting, "Friendship, then, consists more in loving; and people who love their friends are praised; hence, it would seem, loving is the virtue of friends" (p. 128). What did this virtue mean for *Jennifer 1999*? She concludes, "I felt found, for the first time really, and I haven't been able to say that since."

Alongside the social challenge of proximity cultivating community, Class Afloat has programmatic elements that foster community. Respondent stories concretely identify program elements like class time and ship duties as meaningful platforms for relationship development. From a programmatic perspective, respondents most frequently identified the influence of teachers and the professional crew through class time, sailing, and bonding through ship duties. *Erin 2002*, for instance, touches on all of these as she reflects on community life aboard Class Afloat. She notes:

> Whether it was relying on and chatting with your watch group, the shared experience of washing dishes in the galley, or challenging discussions in the classroom, growing a strong community bond was an essential part of the Class Afloat experience – one that connects me not just to *floaties* from my year, but to all participants across all years.

While reflecting on the most significant parts of his Class Afloat experience, *Scott 2011* highlights the Discovery class – a course designed to facilitate processing and deliberation – as significant to bonding the crew. He recalls:

> In the discovery class, we learned about these stages of groups – something like forming, storming, norming, conforming, or something like that. And (teachers) kept telling us about the stages. I was kind of annoyed at that, because I was like, 'we aren't necessarily storming we're just pissed at each other and it happens,' but at the end of it, once we went through all those stages, no matter where I went on the boat, no matter who I talked to, it was so comfortable.

Multiple respondents shared that Class Afloat faculty characterized community building on the boat using Tuckman's (1965) group dynamics model. Briefly, Tuckman (1965) identifies four stages of group development: forming, storming, norming, and performing. During the forming phase participants are largely independent, feeling out the group, learning about one another, and building initial friendships. During the storming phase challenges surface between participants – largely around behaviors and perceived character – as well as around the shared goal and associated implicit and explicit obligations individuals have to the shared goal. During the norming phase cooperation and increased intimacy surface because of resolved conflicts, and commitment to shared goals overrides minor disagreements and personality clashes.

Finally, high levels of trust, commitment to shared goals, and minimally supervised decision-making by team members characterize the performing phase.

Use of this framework gave students language to aid making sense of their experience – at least relationally. *John 2012* is not alone in noting, "Teachers did a great job of facilitating team building for the crew." Similarly, *Nate 2009* notes, "Community aboard the ship was fostered by the director and faculty. You had to buy into the idea of community."

Facilitation around the shared language of Tuckman's (1965) model also suggests an intentional reframing of casual conversation and conflict by faculty on board Class Afloat. By reframing the natural sharing and tensions of life aboard a ship with connection to group dynamics, faculty could reshape how students understand those experiences – within the construct of group development – around shared goals. Along these lines, Margaret Pestorius (2006) links group participation to "how frequently, and in what way, voices join the communal discourse of the group." She notes that joining the group discourse and "building shared meaning" is significant to increased group participation. The shared language of Tuckman's (1965) group dynamics functions largely as a *shared meaning* foundation for participants. Time to process that foundation – and/or enter the communal discourse – seems to have happened for participants formally through class time as well as informally through casual conversation during downtime, watch, galley, or other duties.

While *Nate 2009* indicates his general confidence in faculty to guide community building, he also highlights how faculty direction can leave participants psychologically vulnerable. Speaking about the "Discovery Course" as the particular place students were "invited to process their experience" and "reflect sociologically on the notion of community," *Nate 2009* clarifies a potential challenge associated with faculty constructing shared meaning for the group with two specific examples. Regarding the first, a class conversation about how to charitably invest in Senegal, *Nate 2009* reflects on what he perceives as the darker side of faculty driven community building aboard Class Afloat:

> The focus on community could easily shift to consensus; opening teachers up to something like indoctrinating students. Some students were attacked verbally and emotionally for not adopting the mainstream ideological perspective on these sorts of issues. The boat lacked a system of checks and balances, and classes like Discovery were often emotionally unsafe and intolerant of non-conforming students.

Regarding the second, involving a suicidal participant who was ultimately removed from the boat, *Nate 2009* recalls, "The whole incident was handled poorly. Teachers felt more like a peer group – interfering with relationships, flirting with students, the adult group was unsafe with a young teaching corps. This is particularly interesting in the context of experiential learning given the theoretical bend toward co-learning and mentorship over and against authoritarian hierarchy. Within the onboard context, where clear authoritarian roles exist – captain, boson, and on – stories suggest faculty were challenged by the required pivot between these contrasting models of authority.

For instance, one of the challenges associated with facilitating the adoption of shared meaning is allowing flexibility in how that meaning is owned or understood by the group – something that is largely granted through trust (Allison & Wurdinger, 2005). *Nate's 2009* perception suggests that the appropriate level of trust may have been missing, or the appropriate level of empowerment for meaning making was not extended. Similarly, *John 2012* recalls, "For the most part, the faculty treated us like little kids."

As an exception to this generalization, *John 2012* goes on to praise one teacher that stood out, as well as the boson and professional crew. He adds:

> I really connected with one teacher in particular – in English. That relationship was comforting and inspiring. I was also empowered by our boson and the seamen. They offered significant guidance teaching us to sail and I took every opportunity I could to learn – often covering for other people's shifts just to get more time sailing. Their mentorship was hugely important to me.

This exception speaks to the theoretical prescription of both experiential learning and Aristotelian virtue models: unequally paired friendships – like teacher to student or parent to child – provide a rich opportunity for mentorship and virtue training (Aristotle, 1985, p. 127). *Scott 2011* shares a similar reflection praising the professional crew rather

than the faculty, saying, “The teachers didn’t serve as mentors but the professional crew did. They were really authentic – not caught up in all the bullshit that went down on the ship.” Likewise, *Thomas 1985* recalls, “the faculty didn’t have a clue what they were doing. The whole program was a bunch of money getting splashed around to see if they could make sail training work. There were four or five kids that ran the boat.” In contrast to the faculty, he goes on to praise the professional crew saying, “I really grew close with the sailors.”

Across respondent stories, the professional crew is broadly and repeatedly characterized as distant, gruff, authentic, and professional. In contrast, the faculty is perceived as less professional, less respected, and less impactful. Clear exceptions are noted. Take for instance, *John 2012* above, or *Jennifer 1999* who singles out “a first semester English teacher with strong charisma and a great sense of humor” as a faculty member who both inspired and supported her during the experience. It is interesting, however, that upon reflection, from two to nearly thirty years later, stories communicate a consistent picture of faculty that is young, ill equipped, and unprofessional.

Rebecca 1995 highlights one challenge faculty faced in facilitating community and building effective relationships with students during her Class Afloat experience, noting the instability and turnover in the teaching corps and staff team:

> I don’t think a single teacher or professional crewmember remained through the whole ten and a half months and I don’t think that’s normal. Because we weren’t clear about what was happening above us we kind of stuck to each other. Unfortunately, we had two captains and three bosons across the year, so while I loved and respected them all, none of them was around long enough to really develop those strong relationships. In the absence of those mentoring relationships, we students banded together.

In addition to the role played by courses, teachers, and the professional crew, a number of respondents identified ship duties as important to the development of friendships, and by extension community. As noted in Chapter 4, work on board the ship created a context for social bonds to develop through casual conversation as well as duty focused group deliberation. *Erin 2002* points out the value of dedicated time and required participation in ship duties toward fostering social bonds, noting, “Conversations in the

galley or on deck allowed us to really share who we were with each other and to build trust." *Carter 2011* shares a similar perspective, relating a story about a friendship he built through watch:

> For me, the experience was really about buying-in and being a part of the team. All those nights on watch, we would sit and talk – tell stories, talk about life, talk about the trip. We would argue and work our way back to agreement. We would sort out the drama and stress and tension, and find agreement. We had to – we were part of the same team and we were all pulling the same direction.

Comparing the Class Afloat experience to his University time, *Carter 2011* notes that both were characterized by "small and isolated communities," both "required working together with others and in relationship." In his reflections, Carter suggests that his transition from being a "pretty withdrawn, timid, and anxious" high school student to his emergence as a confident, empowered, and adventurous adult is largely due to the Class Afloat experience – and specifically the friendships he developed. Interestingly, Carter 2011 joined his cohort as a second semester participant, facing a steep learning curve and stepping into a largely formed community with established friendships. In spite of this, he felt accepted quickly and developed "deep friendships." So much so, that he names peers as his primary mentors, for their efforts encouraging him to "step out of his shell" and teaching him to sail. According to *Nate 2009*, ship duties created a "shared place" where normal social expectations were breached" and it was "easy to find things in common with people." *John 2012* also affirms the notion that ship duties created space for relationships to grow:

> We were living and working together in such a small space. People were more real, more authentic. We shared stuff that mattered. I think that's what really drew others in, what helped us become deeper friends. I got a lot better at listening because of Class Afloat. We learned to listen, to trust each other, to be empathetic.

Shared Experience

Many respondents made reference to the power of shared goals and obligation to classmates as factors in the development of social bonds on board Class Afloat, with

nearly two-thirds of respondents using the phrase "shared experience" to generalize the bond they formed with classmates. This shared experience was so moving, as noted above, that cumulatively speaking *Erin 2002* notes feeling connected not just to her cohort, but also to all Class Afloat participants. Unpacking this notion of "shared experience," *Gary 2008* explains:

> There's this idea that if you meet someone romantically on a bridge you are much more likely to form a strong relationship with them because it's a rickety old bridge or an exotic location. I think something similar can be said for Class Afloat. Most of us will never sail on a ship like that again. We will probably never go to those places again, so it's natural that the friendships are that strong. In some ways my Class Afloat friendships dwarf the other friendships I've had in high school and at Uni, because they were so unique, and the things we did were so unique. So if relationships are built on what you do, and the things we did were so unique, it makes sense that the relationships would be so strong…. I mean, I'm never going to sail a ship like that again, so all those experiences are more memorable because of the uniqueness. Anytime there was a storm, or a whale, or a dolphin, or all these lucky things that we got to encounter – it was more memorable because there was someone there. When we meet up now, it's the icebreaker to conversations – 'Do you remember…' 'Yeah.'

Overall, the collection of more cumulative reflections led to the identification of three distinct elements perceived by respondents to account for why this "shared experience" was so powerful: unique moments, unexpected yet deep friendships, and sharing a trajectory in the journey.

The sense that respondents partook in a once in a lifetime experience came up often in stories – regardless of the adventures respondents undertook later in life. Some, like *Mary 1996*, visibly retreated into her memories as she retold them – pausing frequently, eyes drifting up, recollecting each scene with an almost giddy smile. She shares:

> There was one night that the red tide was really in bloom, so everything was glowy, and we had a whale come near us and you could see this glowing mass in the water and it was the coolest thing. You could see the whole school of fish it was chasing as a group of shimmers. I think it was another night, when dolphins came and swam with us and as they would jump out of the water they would leave this wake of phosphorescence. And it was like magic. I loved being up at night, with the stars. I remember just sitting there thinking, 'Who sees this?'

Every respondent highlighted at least one memory that was perceived as significant and unrepeatable. These included programmatic elements like climbing rigging or the Main Royale, but they also included context driven moments – a unique sunset, a bonfire at port, a holiday at sea, a variety of natural phenomena, and on. These moments positioned the experience as one that would be difficult to share with others who had not experienced them. Consequently, those who shared the moments become more valuable beacons for the memory itself.

For many, like *John 2012*, the most significant memories focused more on the relational connections. He reflects:

> Strong community grew out of our experiences together across the voyage. I remember laughing with friends over inside jokes, meeting up at coffeehouses in port, working through conflict, finding ways to care for each other better. There was a group of girls that took it upon themselves to plan birthday celebrations for everyone. We all had each other's back, and felt supported and cared for by the rest of the students.

Something about experiencing the voyage together encouraged a deeper sense of reliance, trust, vulnerability, and obligation – all characteristic of moving deeper into friendship. Perhaps Aristotle (1985) was right to suggest that in friendship, "Sea travellers seek the advantage proper to a journey" (p. 129). If the proverb is true, as Aristotle suggests that, "what friends have is common," then there is much to be gained by cultivating friendship on Class Afloat (p. 129). The advantages of friendship lie both in sharing – whether space, duties or moments - and in justice. On Aristotle's (1985) account we expect that practicing the relational caring associated with shared living and obligation to do right by one another increases as relational depth increases. An insight he likens to a group of sailors, soldiers, or a city.

A variety of similar analogies emerge from respondents as they discuss friendship and community on board Class Afloat –each drawing out a slightly different facet of social bonds and community life. For *Thomas 1985*, the experience mirrored a summer camp setting where participants become fast friends knowing they have a set period of time together. Class Afloat offered "a much deeper and different community, but getting started with friendships was a lot like camp." Connecting to Aristotle's notion of

journeying together, the initial "friend-making" aboard Class Afloat moves individuals from isolation into community. This transition is important, as it reduces insecurities associated with fit and role aboard the ship. Furthermore, it deepens obligation to the other. Respondents talked frequently about "having each other's back," and "pulling their weight" for the sake of everyone.

Going further, *Thomas 1985* identified "being outgoing" and "embracing the moment" as important characteristics for someone trying to build friendships in similar fashion. Like camp, Class Afloat has an isolated setting with a fixed set of participants. *Nate 2009* concurs, noting, "The community on Class Afloat fostered an environment for carpe diem." Having that kind of culture on board Class Afloat aligns with Aristotle's notion of friends sharing in common – at least in the context of shared moments and memories.

Carter 2011, who likened the community on board to an ensemble, reflects Aristotle's (1999) insight regarding the nature of friendship between a group of sailors or soldiers. For him, friendships were rich largely because the community worked together and valued everyone. *Carter 2011* notes, "Although everyone had their own small goals and competing interests we backed a team effort, and that requires many in unison and everyone is important, just like an ensemble."

Rebecca 1995 and several other respondents highlight similar commitments, but suggest a deeper obligation likening community on board to familial ties. Numerous respondents mentioned community on board feeling like a family. Rebecca 1995 notes how unique this phenomenon seemed to her:

> Again, how many different situations could you put all these different people together, in such tight quarters, and expect them to get along like a family? Expect them to support each other in dangerous and scary times? I think Class Afloat the organization has always done a very good job of building that community from the start.

Then *Rebecca 1995* shifts her analogy. She continues, "It's like this Utopian society. You're living there out in the middle of the ocean, in your own little la-la land. [Class Afloat has] its own culture." Similarly, *Gary 2008* notes, "I guess that's where the talk

of the dean about us being one big family comes in. Because Class Afloat is a small space, it's comparable to a city – where people have their routines and go about their business." He goes on to discuss the comfort in knowing and being known associated with friendship on board. Maybe it was Utopia, but according to *Gary 2008* it was more like a city than family. He recalls:

> You would think, with the boat being so small and the number of people on it being so little, that you would know all the intimate details about everybody. But really what it came down to was more like you had a group of half a dozen that you were really tight with, and then another dozen you could joke with, but there were at least another dozen that remained mysterious.

Similarly, Aristotle (1999) connects the advantages of friendship to a well-working city, suggesting, "Friendship would seem to hold cities together." And further, "If people are friends, they have no need of justice." Perhaps deep friendship was not available for all participants to experience with all other participants, but the combination of close relational ties with broader obligation toward a shared goal set the foundation for motivated community building across the cohort alongside opportunity to cultivate deep friendships with at least a few.

It can be clearly inferred from respondent reflections that Class Afloat took programmatic steps toward supporting participant community building on board.

For some, however, reflection on community building and friendships during Class Afloat were less positive. *Jess 2008* signed up for Class Afloat "excited to find and make new friends." She remembers "wanting a certain kind of friendship." Though she remembers the overall experience in a positive light, her lack of friendships and belonging was a significant challenge:

> I really learned to be on my own and it was a very lonely time. I lacked good friendships so stopping in at port meant I was stuck with another girl that was always left out. I started to become less picky about who I would befriend, I guess. It changed my perspective on friendship. My college memories really stand out more because of the strong friendships I developed there.

Going on, *Jess 2008* says that "community on the ship was forced," and the loneliness took a toll. "It was a strong emotional period for me." She was not alone in this

assessment. *Nate 2011* and *Erin 2002* also identified a "forced" feeling around community building. *Scott 2011* notices the same, though his perception differs slightly:

> Community felt like a forced friendship on the boat, but that wasn't a bad thing. The whole community was cool at the time because we were all working toward the same things, so I felt like I belonged with everyone, but I didn't get the same depth and connection with everyone as I did with the friendships I made. I really keep in contact with the friends that I spent the most time with during the voyage and in ports.

Kim 2005, who started the program mid-year, remembers encountering "cliques" as she tried to build friendships. This challenge was exacerbated in ports, as she had to find her place in an already established community. When she did find her place within the cohort, Kim 2005 found a sense of "connectedness" that she found difficult to recreate later in life. She reflects, "The significance of the shared experience, the connectedness we had as a group of friends, as a crew – we shared so much that I still feel connected to those people."

Together, the social pressures, shared proximity, shared context and program, and overall sense of shared experience foster an environment ripe for cultivating friendship and community. Given its social dimension, such an environment also invites the situated practice of practical wisdom.

Cultivating Friendship, Community & Practical Wisdom

The personal and social learning associated with friendship highlights connections between a care ethic and neo-Aristotelian virtue theory. As Kristjansson (2010) notes, the gap between moral cognition and action requires education linking rational, existential, and emotional conditioning approaches. Friendship plays a significant role in at least the latter two. It is through the theory-practice combination provided through friendship that participants wrestle through their own metaphysical questions regarding the kind of people they want to become (Allison, 2011; Brogan, 2002; Kristjansson, 2010). Further, the emergence of practical wisdom is due in large part to practice that attends to "the right kind of sentiments, sensitivities and sensibilities" (Carr, 2003).

Additionally, Homiak (1989) highlights friendship as a way to balance rational and care approaches to making wise decisions – that is, phronesis is cultivated through Aristotelian friendship (Sherman, 1989).

If Aristotle (1999) is right in identifying the virtue of friendship as love, and in highlighting the close connection between friendship and justice, then cultivating a tight-knit community (in the ideal sense) ought to bring relational advantages to the cohort during the experience, and foster the practice of the virtue of love in participants. Further, it will be a love predicated on mutual appreciation and good will and governed by *phronesis*, such that love is preferential and reciprocal (Aristotle, 1985; Wivestad, 2008).

Respondent reflections appear to support this line of argument. For instance, stories from *John 2012*, *Lars 2009*, and *Mary 1996* are largely characterized by themes of increased empathy, listening, and increased care for others. Similarly, *Scott 2011*, *Gary 2008*, *Ashley 2003*, *Jennifer 1999*, and *Rebecca 1995* highlight themes of connectedness, belonging, being known, or being loved. For *Kim 2005*, the community building experience (particularly in terms of onboard camaraderie leading to genuine friendships) is what made Class Afloat so special:

> Maybe it was the sense of community. It was almost like you've been put in a setting with a group of people and you can't choose them as your friends, but you are having these shared experiences with them and you have to work with them in order to achieve your common goals, and to survive in that setting. And that does form a very intense sense of community that is almost like a family. Maybe it's more of a community feel with a few close friendships within that, if that makes sense. I felt very bonded to everyone in a way – in a very deep way – in that I somehow knew everything about everyone and they knew everything about me. Within that, my close friends were probably just a handful of those – they were the people I really confided in.

At the very least, the experience provided the right environment for cultivating virtue associated with friendship and community (in the ideal – and perhaps program intended – sense) within the cohort. Speaking at length about "belonging," *Scott 2011's* reflection evidences the virtue of love in practice on board Class Afloat:

> I felt like I belonged so much. At the end of it you're totally comfortable with yourself, and with who[m] everybody else is. Everybody is just straightforward with each other and there's no bullshit. Getting to that point took probably five or six months. And then, everyone just gets along, and those who don't [get along] don't, and it's fine with them too. It's really the belonging thing – everybody just kind of belonging in this thing. It was the one thing I was really just like 'wow.' And I've never found that anywhere else, I mean anywhere else – not at University, or on volunteer trips. You never get that same depth of connection. The people I was closest too – we would argue and go through bad times too, but that's what really made the connection deepen. You were forced to confront them afterwards. You can't just avoid them. It's because of the smallness of the boat.

Gary draws on the comfort of knowing and being known when he recalls his Class Afloat friendships. Here too, the connectedness and care for another is evident:

> The greatest thing I took away from Class Afloat was these relationships. Specifically, roommates after Class Afloat finished. With the close quarters comes opportunity. You really get to know people – you learn things about them, they tell you things about themselves. At Uni I was roommates with a guy I had shared a cabin with for the full ten months of Class Afloat. With him there was none of this song and dance of stepping on eggshells or feeling like you've got to tread lightly. There's comfort in that.

All of this affirms Aristotle's (1985) notion that "good people's life together allows the cultivation of virtue" (p. 149) Proximity, shared experience, and dialogue prove central to cultivating the vulnerability and intimacy associated with friendship as well as the trust and cooperative spirit required for community (both the casual space for camaraderie, and the starting point toward an ideal). For Aristotle's (1985), friends "live together and share conversation and thought" (p.150), and a "lack of conversation has dissolved many a friendship" (p. 124). Further, participants of Class Afloat share some unique advantages because of their youth. Kristjansson (2014) uncovers a series of valuable characteristics that Aristotle suggests, "come more easily to young people," including: open-mindedness, optimism, trust, courage, and a fondness for their friends that is not guided by utility.

Brogan (2002) goes further, drawing on Gadamer's understanding of Aristotle, to highlight the value of friendship in cultivating virtue:

> In a special way, the mirroring and reflection that occurs in friendship is the foundation that makes possible our knowing awareness of our own being. And perhaps for this reason our knowledge of all being and of being in general is at stake in friendship. (p. 153)

The claim exalts friendship as a necessary constituent not just in cultivating *phronesis*, but also for flourishing (*eudaimonia*). Similar to Tiberius' (2008) attentional flexibility, Brogan (2002) shows that friendship ties together the practical and contemplative lives. Whereas for Tiberius, the practice of attentional flexibility allows one to shift between fully engaging experience and reflection on one's experience at the appropriate time, Brogan (2002) views friendship as the medium that draws contemplation and activity together. It is in friendship that we are able to both experience and reflect. Without friendship, we lack the mirrors that allow us to know and be known. Or, in the stories of Rebecca *1995* and Jennifer *1999*, the community of Class Afloat is "where I found myself" (such that community references some ideal regarding personal *fit* or *purpose finding* rooted in both casual camaraderie and genuine friendship).

Virtue friendship – the context being described by Aristotle (1999) and Brogan (2002) – supposes participation by two individuals who are already practically wise (*phronetic*). While Class Afloat participants fail Aristotle's criteria for such friendship, the context of ship life is ripe for cultivating the kinds of friends who seek the good of the other. Beyond these virtue friendships, the collaborative facet of *phronesis* discussed in Chapter 2 suggests value in maintaining community bonds (programmatically supporting strong camaraderie) built around shared goals and experiences. The practically wise person is concerned with both individual and societal flourishing, seeking goods associated with both friendships and meaningful community (in the ideal sense). Within this context, the exercise of discernment necessarily involves social awareness. The practically wise person acts virtuously for the sake of both individual and societal flourishing – requiring engagement in friendships and meaningful community (in the ideal sense).

Concluding Thoughts

Moving from loneliness toward that ideal notion of community, respondents identify several significant conditions for cultivating friendship and community building. The nature of Class Afloat generates a need for community (starting with camaraderie) by isolating participants from their former communities and placing them in close proximity with new people. Additionally, participants share goals and obligations on board that bind them to each other in unique ways. Respondents saw these conditions as largely positive, and retrospectively viewed most negative relational experiences as ultimately beneficial as they grew from them (with noted exceptions). From an Aristotelian perspective, several significant questions remain.

First, did the shared context serve to deepen friendships beyond utility and pleasure? If so, we might expect respondents to talk about Class Afloat friendships as ongoing rather than something experienced in the past. Furthermore, the friendships ought to include ongoing dialogue, such that through friendship, "knowing is reciprocal and not one-sided" (Brogan, 2002). More directly, virtue friendships are likely absent if the whole of *staying connected* consists in remembering the shared experience of Class Afloat, and little evidence exists to suggest on-going connectedness that is perceived to impact how participants see themselves – both in themselves and as they are mirrored in their friendships.

Second, have participants been equipped with the practices, habits, or skills requisite for friendship and community building (in the ideal sense), or was relationship building on board Class Afloat largely contextual (and fixed at a lower relational plane like camaraderie) – the natural outcome of new people placed together on a small space with a shared goal? If the latter is true, it raises further questions for sail training and experiential learning generally where claims to leadership development through community building (in the ideal sense) are common. For instance, are attempts at community building an imposed practice – one that participants are guided to through a particular set of imposed conditions and practices? Conversely, do particular practices exist and for some reason Class Afloat participants did not acquire them? In either case,

making sense of the kind of friendship and community building across a lifetime imagined by Aristotle, such that members continue to grow in practical wisdom, requires understanding the constituents of community building that can be practiced by participants as they enter new contexts in life – e.g. university, vocation, family. If such practices, habits, and skills have been cultivated, respondents might be expected to have formed similar communities in alternative settings.

Exploring these questions, and the impact they have on participants' ability to live virtuous and practically wise lives, will be the focus of Part 3.

Part 3: Life beyond Class Afloat

Research Question 1

In retrospect, how do participants view their experience in terms of contribution to personal and social development?

Research Question 3

In retrospect, what ways (if any) do participants perceive the experience to have shifted their personal identity, value commitments, or the practice of virtues – moral and prudential (insofar as these are perceived as contributors to increased practical wisdom)?

Chapter 7: Making Sense of Reintegration

Chapter 8: A Second Look at Personal Challenges & Growth

Chapter 9: A Second Look at Social Challenges & Growth

Chapter 7: Making Sense of Reintegration

Introduction

To this point, the study has explored respondent perceptions regarding their onboard Class Afloat experience, insofar as it connects to personal and social growth. Specifically, stories have been examined to lift respondent perceptions suggesting growth in Aristotelian and neo-Aristotelian moral virtues, intellectual virtues, and in virtues serving as constituents of practical wisdom.

Part 3 (chapters 7-9) introduces a turn toward program alumni perceptions of life since the Class Afloat experience. Respondent stories suggest ongoing growth in personal and social learning. Much of this ongoing learning stems from growth catalyzed onboard. Furthermore, the learning is perceived by program alumni to extend into post voyage life as practices and skills transfer from the onboard context to a new yet familiar environment: home.

This chapter explores the challenge of reintegration to life at home – particularly as it relates to overall perceptions related to the significance of the Class Afloat experience and the importance of the onboard community. Additionally, the chapter introduces a model of transformation – Aristotelian in nature – which supports examining transformation by evaluating the vision, intention, and means applied to engaging the new way of being (Willard, 2002).

Reintegration

There is a consistent thread of experiential learning literature, especially within Outdoor and Adventure Education circles, which speaks to the challenges presented by reintegration – or the process of returning home from expedition-like experiences and transitioning back to life at home (D'Amato & Krasny, 2011; Allison & Beames, 2010;

Mezirow, 2000). Practitioners and theorists alike have come to recognize and anticipate the "culture shock" or "disruption" associated with returning home after intense and elongated experiences (Rea, 2006).

For example, in a longitudinal study examining participant perceptions regarding the significance of "January winter session" service learning experience, Kiely (2004, 2005) notes, "The data consistently shows that experiencing high intensity dissonance creates permanent markers in students' frame of reference." In a similar study of outdoor courses (16-78 days) connected to National Outdoor Leadership School and Outward Bound, D'Amato & Krasny (2011) note, "Returning to their daily routines post-course seemed to constitute a disorienting dilemma." That is, stepping away from the experience does not silence the dissonance. Furthermore, both these studies reference significantly shorter experiences than the voyage offered by Class Afloat.

As noted throughout, respondent stories affirm significant changes in self-understanding. The collective Class Afloat experience – including aforementioned chores, challenges, contexts, and community – is viewed as life altering, full of specific examples of personal and social development that are perceived by respondents to have largely reshaped their personal and social identities. The metaphysical mental mapping participants have been working on throughout their Class Afloat journey occurs independent of friends and family not embedded in the experience.

Gary 2008 remembers how teachers tried to prepare his cohort for their return home, noting:

> That's something they emphasized on the trip. They said, 'it's going to take you guys a long time to unpack this.' They did this thing at the end of the year. I remember we sat down at the front of the ship, and a couple of the faculty that have been doing it for years were like, 'you know, it's going to be over and you're going to have this cultural whiplash, and it may take you a long time to figure out what exactly this has all meant to you'.

However, even with this foreknowledge, participants appear to struggle through the transition home. Respondent stories consistently discussed the reintegration processes as

a major theme of their lives after Class Afloat. Returning home was consistently perceived as a serious challenge with significant impact for participants – particularly as they struggle to understand themselves and be understood outside of the ship environment.

Through a "repositioning process" participants return to their home context having constructed a "new frame of reference" (Kiely, 2005). Family and friends at home engage participants without an awareness of these emerging changes. Consequently, upon return respondents, who feel changed, mature, and different, suddenly also feel largely misunderstood. For many, life at home was a stark contrast to the daily adventure on board Class Afloat.

Parallel to the challenges within Class Afloat, reintegration to life without Class Afloat appears to generate a second "disorienting dissonance" (Mezirow, 2000). As respondents reflect on their perceptions of this second dissonance, two themes emerged from analysis of interviews: first, a reinforced sense that their Class Afloat experience was significant, and second, that onboard relationships were unique and possibly irreplaceable.

A Significant Experience

Participants surveyed and interviewed overwhelmingly characterized their Class Afloat experience as "significant" relative to other life experiences. Among those surveyed, 96% claim the experience caused a change in them, 97% would recommend the program to others, and in an open response to "List 3 words that reflect your overall impression of your Class Afloat experience" 99% of the words or phrases listed carry a positive connotation with the specific phrase "life-changing" or "life-altering" occurring in 40% of responses (the exceptions include "lonely," "cult-like," and "upsetting," and even these appear next to additional positive words and phrases). These findings align closely to questionnaire findings in Takano's (2010) retrospective study.

Interview respondents further affirm the positive "significance" past participants associate with Class Afloat. *John 2012*, *Carter 2011*, *Lars 2009*, *Kim 2005*, *Erin 2002*, *Simon 2002*, and *Jennifer 1999* name Class Afloat the most "important," "unique," or "significant" experience of their lives. *Jess 2008* places it second behind a long-term relationship. For *Arthur 1999*, the perceived significance of Class Afloat is expressed concretely. Having fallen in love with sailing aboard Class Afloat, *Arthur 1999* pursued a vocation that would keep him connected to the sea. He currently works for the US Ocean Agency. *Nate 2010*, more abstractly, calls Class Afloat "a defining experience" that was "paradigm shifting…like a slingshot."

The uniqueness of an experience like Class Afloat was not lost on respondents. The notion that Class Afloat is a "once in a lifetime opportunity" appears to be a large part of what makes the experience so significant to participants. As *Kim 2005* notes:

> I think you see the world in a different way when you travel with Class Afloat. And Class Afloat goes to some places that are so remote that I wouldn't have the opportunity to visit even if I had a very large budget to travel. Like St. Helena, an island in the middle of the South Atlantic, where Napoleon is buried, there's literally no airport so you have to take a ship from Namibia. To be able to go to these places that are relatively inaccessible and are not globalized gives you really good perspective – especially if you live in a very cosmopolitan place like I do here in Toronto.

As we will see later, Kim's 2005 Class Afloat experience led to shifting values in geography and anthropology that have shaped her academic and vocational pursuits since. Similarly, *Ashley 2003* affirms that novelty is a large part of what draws respondents to the experience. She notes:

> Class Afloat was my first taste of being able to have perspective in any situation – particularly new experiences, new groups of people, and new places – challenging settings as well. Class Afloat solidified many of my yearnings and goals by actually bringing me to these places that I had dreamed of and putting me in the middle of the ocean. It wasn't a new sentiment – having a global perspective – it was something I wanted and Class Afloat started to give it to me.

Both *Kim 2005* and *Ashley 2003* link the unique opportunities built into Class Afloat to personal growth in perspective – specifically in gaining a broader global understanding.

The collection of experiences participants undertook are new and "eye-opening." *Ashley's 2003* story goes on to express just why her Class Afloat experience was so "life changing":

> [Class Afloat] was sort of an incubator to the other things I've done in my life since [the experience]. Before going on the boat, I was really into school and I was very social, but if I hadn't gone on the boat my world would have – how do I say this – would have remained sort of sheltered. I probably would have stayed closer to home for university, and stayed amongst a lot of the same friends, and maybe not ventured as far. But going on Class Afloat, I came back and had to do a year of high school back at my old school. Re-entry from the program can be kind of tough because you've met all these people from all around the world and had all these experiences and then when you have to go back to regular life it's a bit of a – not a letdown, but an adjustment. So, I went back and I had to complete grade 12 at my HS. I think just having that experience and excitement and having met all the new people and visited all those places from Class Afloat – I had that in me.

Many respondents affirm *Ashley's 2003* "incubator" analogy, sharing their perception that without Class Afloat their lives would have failed to *hatch* beyond the life participants had imagined or aspired to previously – what Hockey (2009) identifies as a "standardized life course" (p. 229). Class Afloat presents participants with a new and enticing alternative to the lives they previously imagined themselves living. In this sense, the significance participants assign to Class Afloat can be linked to the notion that experiences like Class Afloat serve as "clarifying experiences where young people have a chance to make decisions about their future and set their course" (Allison et al., 2011).

Scott 2011 trades on *Ashley's 2003* incubator analogy, suggesting Class Afloat introduced him to a new level [of living] – launching him toward greater experiences:

> Class Afloat wasn't really a new beginning, but another level. People go through different levels. The year after Class Afloat I started my own business, and this last year I volunteered in Nepal, and I taught English. Each year there's a new level and you just keep moving forward, and that Class Afloat year was probably the first major part of it. People remember their wedding date. For me, I stepped foot on that boat on the 25th of August in 2011 and I got off of that boat on June 10th in 2012. I remember it specifically, and it's like I went to the next level.

Interestingly, *Scott 2011* did not remember the dates of subsequent "levels" suggesting there was something unique about Class Afloat as the "first major part." Similarly, *Mary 1996* identifies Class Afloat as a transformative event in her life "that changed everything for me" comparable to experiencing divorce and the birth of her daughter. She notes, "I think Class Afloat gives you a new paradigm through which you look at life – because you still have things that are essentially you, but it's like a whole new thing." For *Mary 1996*, Class Afloat laid the groundwork for contextualizing global experiences. It was the initial, eye-opening experience that created categories for understanding future experiences – it was her new paradigm for travel, global perspective, and engaging with others. In her story, *Mary 1996* recounts several travel experiences occurring after her Class Afloat journey where she faced serious danger – dodging bombings in Jerusalem and Egypt. *Mary 1996* comments:

> You're not really looking at your world when you are seventeen, and then you go on Class Afloat. These later experiences in Jerusalem and Egypt, while they were important events – events that give you a different perspective on life –weren't transformative. They were already part of the new paradigm, at that point, that I had received from my experience on Class Afloat. So, I think that Class Afloat – I mean, I had a world perspective before I went – but then I came back and my world was bigger.

The paradigm shift *Mary 1996* associates with her Class Afloat experience so expanded her sense of self and the world, it seems, that she generated new categories which could contextualize and make sense of future experiences as significant as international bombings. In addition to a broader global perspective, *Mary 1996* attributes her Class Afloat paradigm shift with giving her a desire to "give back to the world," "make good on the investment of others," and find others to "invest in." She adds:

> Sure, I think these were traits that I had before Class Afloat. But what I think Class Afloat really did to really expand, and solidify, and strengthen [those traits] was to expose me to so many people from so many different backgrounds. I really learned that people are the same everywhere…and everyone has a unique story.

She goes on to share specific, current examples of her personal generosity and empathy, which she connects directly to her Class Afloat learning – solidifying her own belief that the experience cultivated in her a new, transformed way of being.

Gary's 2009 sense that his Class Afloat experience was paradigm shifting didn't emerge until he settled into life at university. Reflecting on his Class Afloat experience, he highlights travel, experience sharing a room, and freedoms akin to those associated with college independence as "formative" markers. He goes on to explain that having already experienced these things through the Class Afloat voyage, similar opportunities at university were embraced with reduced enthusiasm. *Gary 2009* reflects:

> Having been on Class Afloat, the normal university thing wasn't new or as exciting. I was keen to have the dorm room experience and all that stuff, but just not nearly as thrilled by it because I had already done it, and lucky me, it was all the more exciting having been on Class Afloat. Probably a lot of people who do the gap year thing would say the same. It's a pretty formative year, and to have already had the traveling and partying experiences and whatever else under your belt – it's just that one-year difference but it's pretty huge around that time.

Respondents highlight the significance of Class Afloat largely because it was formative in these ways. The perception that the experience was significant appears to hold even when the memories themselves wane. *Kim 2005* comments:

> I feel really lucky to have had the Class Afloat experience. I kind of wish it didn't feel so far away. I mean, now, almost ten years later, that's a long period of time. Some memories aren't all that sharp and unless I look at a photograph it's hard to remember some things. And I think, 'what a shame,' because I'd love to have the more vivid memories still with me.

The paradigm-shifting impact of Class Afloat as a single life experience is difficult to overstate. Participants highlight it as such up to twenty-three years after having sailed. As Chapter 8 discusses further, stepping away from an experience of that magnitude – one where the most mundane day was still full of adventure – was a significant challenge for respondents.

Meaningful Relationships

Beneath the raw adventure of the Class Afloat experience, participants perceive a robust network of relationships – friendships and community within their individual cohorts – that supported and enhanced personal growth while challenging participants to grow socially as well.

Although, as *Kim 2005* notes, "boarding the ship is itself an act of courage" given the social challenges awaiting each fresh cohort of strangers, most respondents perceive their return to previous or "normal" life as the greater struggle. *Kim 2005* remembers:

> When I first came back I talked about it a lot and I felt – for probably a year – very disconnected from home and from people who hadn't been on board. I missed the sense of community we had on board the ship. We still had that strong sense of connection but weren't close enough to really share it. I was kind of sad through my undergrad because I went to the University of Toronto and it's a commuter school and quite large, so it's difficult to get to know people unless they are in your classes and I wanted to have more connection then I was able to have.

Kim's 2005 experience matches the majority of respondent reports. For *Gary 2008*, the disruption caused by leaving Class Afloat had much to do with proximity and friendships. He notes:

> One of the things I missed right away, when it was all over, was that on board you could literally reach out of your bed and just tap somebody – do something, talk about something, play cards, whatever, during your down time. So, that closeness was pretty cool."

Without the same proximity, schedule, and relational openness, for many respondents life at home immediately following the experience felt like a stark contrast compared to the daily community they were embedded in during the Class Afloat voyage. *Carter 2011*, recalls what felt like a "loss of momentum" in life due largely to "feeling misunderstood and unknown" by those who had been his friends prior to the Class Afloat experience. *Thomas 1985* comments similarly, "When I got out I was fucked. Friendships at home had shifted. It was hard to reconnect with people that didn't go. Everything was different. I just saw things differently." The experience on board

provided a "different, deeper community" than anything *Thomas 1985* had experienced prior, so reintegrating into that "former life" was no easy task. *Rebecca 1995* expands likewise on the same challenge:

> Adjusting back to real life after Class Afloat was very difficult. You have your community, your very close knit community that is constantly around you, in every different situation you might face through the whole Class Afloat experience –schoolwork, social, strangers in port – you have this community around you at all times. You know they're supportive of you. So to have to go off, to leave the boat, and have no one understand what you've just been through, and not have anyone to share it with – it was very difficult.

It wasn't until her ten-year reunion that *Jennifer 1999* finally reconnected with her Class Afloat friends in person. In her story, *Jennifer 1999* suggests that being disconnected from crewmates led her to what she perceives as more destructive habits. She recalls, "going haywire" after the experience. "When I got home I spent loads of time partying. Alcohol was a big part of my isolation and solace. I hated school and spent as much time as possible talking on the phone with friends from the trip."

Part of the disconnection, at least for those who sailed on earlier voyages was a general lack of technology that could connect participants. *Gary 2008* suggests, "It's probably a completely different thing compared to people who did this in the 80s or 90s, because we know where everyone is and what they are up to at all times, so it's easier in that sense." For many participants sailing since 2005, technology and social media have played an integral role in driving ongoing connectedness between program alumni. These recently available tools allow participants to maintain or continue fostering their Class Afloat community without proximity – something unavailable to cohorts on earlier voyages. It is easy to forget that these now prominent forms of communication are relatively new. Technological tools like email didn't take off until the late 1990s with Hotmail (established in 1996) and Yahoo Mail (established in 1997) and one of the first social medial platforms, MySpace, didn't launch until 2003. As a program alum who sailed prior to the widespread use of these technologies, *Rebecca 1995* makes the point:

> You know, [our Class Afloat voyage] was before the days of text messaging, and email was just coming out in the mid 90s, so not everyone even had an email

> address. Not being able to keep in touch with those people after the experience was very difficult. I remember that trying to acclimatize myself back into the real world without all those support networks around me was very difficult.

These stories suggest that stepping away from the Class Afloat experience was disruption akin to Mezirow's (2000) "disorienting dilemma." It is, it seems, the final challenge embedded in the program itself. The deep relational bonds secured across six to twelve months are abruptly severed as the ship context is dismantled and participants transition to their home context. Participants consistently report feeling changed, mature, and different. Integrating back into home life means relating to known people while simultaneously feeling unknown. Respondent stories reveal a consistent perception: the experience so dramatically shaped participants that the people in their lives who had not shared it could not understand them. As noted previously, respondent stories repeatedly suggest that through the Class Afloat experience, students are on a metaphysical journey, rethinking their identity. Through what Kiely (2005) dubs a "repositioning process," students are constructing a "new frame of reference." It appears significant that this process occurs in the absence of participants' home contexts and relationships. Largely due to the dissonance generated during their Class Afloat experience, as they returned home and attempted to reconstruct relationships with family and old friends, respondents characterized themselves as having an overwhelming sense of being "misunderstood."

Feeling "misunderstood" complicates other losses (routine and friendship) that participants experience as they transition from the ship context to their home context during the reintegration process. For many respondents, feeling misunderstood lent perceived support to an underlying sense that the Class Afloat experience had enlightened them; that they "got it" more than those who did not share in the experience. This appears to be the case for *Mary 1996* who recalls chastising her friends for their emotional investment in things like school spirit, dances, and the like. What she perceived as a lack of "mature perspective" in her friends, *Mary 1996* reflects, made it difficult for her to cultivate meaningful connectedness with old friends, particularly around her post-experience values. The "mirroring" required by Aristotelian virtue

friendship seemed impossible to *Mary 1996* given what appeared to be irreconcilable differences in perspective between herself and peers in her home context. From her perspective, the "small-mindedness" of her former community limited her engagement with those friendships upon return. *Gary 2008* identifies a "phase" within his transition to the home context as a posture of arrogance. Reflecting on his transition from life with six bunkmates on board Class Afloat to sharing a room with his sister at home, *Gary 2009* reflects:

> I had a hard time the year afterword, which I don't think is dissimilar from a lot of people's experiences. It's a culture shock going from this small wooden world that's just floating around to, all of a sudden, there are all these people and priorities are different. I came back and I shared a room with my little sister, and she was like, 'you know you've got to shower, you've got to shave your face, you've got to keep up with just general hygiene.' I mean I smelled tangy, and at the time I was just like, 'well, what's it matter.' I was just being some jackass kid who thought he knew so much more than anybody else. I'm glad I can look back on that now and know it was a phase, but at the time I was running around in rags and here I was, obviously a privileged kid to have gone on this trip in the first place. I don't know what to say about that. The first year is tough. I had a really hard time with that.

In general, the growth and change in perspective acquired through Class Afloat appears to contribute to a tendency in participants to feel misunderstood and thus disconnected from former friendships and family connections. Two program alumni – both from 2009 – offer a notable exception. *Lars 2009* and *Nate 2009*, survived the sinking of their Class Afloat vessel off the coast of Brazil. The event occurred late in their semester, and the brush with mortality added unique insight to their enlightenment. *Lars 2009* reports, "I was always close to my family, but coming back from Class Afloat – especially the way we came home, after the accident – I was more emotionally close to them."

Lars 2009, Like *Mary 1996* and *Gary 2008*, identifies with gaining a new perspective, having opened eyes, and on. Uniquely, however, he reports an emotional softening and willingness to engage relationally even when he was misunderstood. In particular, surviving the ship sinking cemented a sense that he could "take nothing for granted" and needed to "live life full."

Similarly, *Nate 2009* reports that the accident "gave [him] new perspective on life, especially family, and fostered a carpe diem attitude." He adds, "It seems like any virtue we developed [out of the accident] came from our response to adversity, not the adversity itself." Not all survivors viewed the experience as positively as these respondents. *Nate 2009* recalls that "some experienced post-traumatic stress disorder, others became depressed or just forgot the whole experience," adding about himself, "I saw a therapist to work through everything. Sharing the experience didn't define us. How we processed it did."

Vision, Intention, & Means

Participant dissonance is an important part of the "transformational learning" that programs like Class Afloat aim to achieve (Kiely, 2004, p. 6). The context of challenge (both social and physical as discussed in Chapter 5), it seems, pushes participants to see themselves differently and to cultivate the particular excellences associated with personal and social development. Equally, as respondent stories confirm, Class Afloat has developed programmatic practices to help participants process their experience formally and informally (as discussed in Chapter 4) as well as a formal structure for debriefing participants before they return home. Other studies in transformational learning suggest these structures are responsible for helping Class Afloat faculty and staff to "anticipate and prepare more effectively for students' emotional and cognitive responses" (Kiely, 2005; Amato & Krasny, 2011).

Perhaps because of this experience, including the context, program, challenge, reflection, and deliberation, or perhaps due to personal reflection since the experience, stories reveal that participants perceive themselves as not just having experienced growth during the trip. Rather, they perceive themselves as engaging ongoing growth through personal and social challenges – well beyond their time as participants on Class Afloat –in ways which, more often than not, mirror the conditions and practices of their

Class Afloat experience. It is a claim, within these stories, that ongoing growth and lasting change were catalyzed by the Class Afloat experience.

Dallas Willard (2002) suggests three layers that make up a "reliable pattern" for lasting change in our personal and social development: vision, intention, and means. On his view, lasting change can occur when the aim, motivation, and requisite behaviors are aligned. Regarding the ability to cultivate virtues – both moral and prudential – the Class Afloat experience appears to offer a model which prioritizes presenting a vision for engaging a rich personal and social life. As a model for making sense of participant perceptions regarding value commitments and pursuit of a life worth living, it is significant to note that Willard's (2002) pattern mirrors Aristotle's (1985) approach to pursuing the good life (*eudaimonia*).

Engaging the youth of Athens, Aristotle (1985) begins his ethical treatise with a discussion of ultimate ends, casting a vision for the flourishing life (p. 1-14). Equally, he notes that we must be taught both what is good and why we ought to value it, since the motivation is not inherently in us; we must begin to experience the pleasure of living well (p. 16-20).

Following their taste of this new way of doing life (vision) – especially insofar as it highlights the kind of person they are becoming (personal growth), and the kind of community they can be a part of (social growth) – participants return home craving more of the same. Class Afloat stories confirm that the motivation (intention) necessary to find new sources of adventure and establish relationships of connectedness remains strong long after the experience. As D'Amato & Krasny (2011) cite, many other longitudinal and retrospective studies (including Gass, Garvey, & Sugarman, 2003; Everson, 2000; Liddicoat & Krasny, 2014) indicate that programs can impact participants for up to 30 years (Kellert, 1998) and perceived value of programs can appreciate over time (Hattie et al., 1997).

Aligned with these findings, nearly all Class Afloat respondents reflect positively about the significance of their experience in terms of personal and social growth. All

respondents confirm explicitly that their vision for the kind of life they want to pursue was shaped in important ways by onboard experiences. Moreover, the intention to pursue this new vision of life echoes across respondent stories as respondents remember their experiences, and reflect on their lives since.

Cultivating Self Determination

At the center of respondent perceptions regarding how they might pursue this new vision for life and remain motivated to pursue that vision – especially through obstacles like the challenge of reintegration – sits the virtue of self-determination.

As noted in chapter 4, the structure of ship duties was repeatedly identified by respondents as foundational to habit formation. The dissonance presented through transition to onboard life was managed through a rigorous schedule that pushed participants beyond what they thought they could handle. Pushing through discomfort helped participants cultivate temperance, raising individual perceptions regarding what constituted a tolerable workload. For many program alumni, these perceptions transferred to life back home. An increased threshold for getting things done, and an increased insight into the role work plays in sustaining a community, led many program alumni to charge forward through the reintegration process with fresh confidence – grounded in repeated practice during the Class Afloat voyage.

The degree of freedom perceived by program alumni – in terms of self-determination – correlates closely to respondent willingness to take on certain obligations and practice self-discipline both during and after the voyage. As noted in chapter 4, respondent reflections suggest that those who took the opportunity to practice these virtues generated more lasting expressions in their lives after the experience.

Counterintuitive as it may be, the involuntary practice of work – for those who embraced it – led to an increased sense of self-determination – the empowerment and confidence associated with program alumni's ability to do the impossible. Furthermore,

experiencing this breakthrough engaged participants and increased their own expectations, goals, and boundaries. Motivation to take on a bigger vision for life grew, alongside perspective changes and shifting value commitments as participants wrestled through identifying the life they want to live. As that wrestling leads to new value commitments, self-determination strengthens resolve.

For some, returning to a home context included ongoing regulation. Recall that *Gary 2008* discusses continuing to be "properly regulated" by friends and family on issues of hygiene and global perspective, while simultaneously processing reintegration in his own way, showing "independent and creative" inquiry (Roberts & Woods, 2007, p. 260). Similarly, *Lars 2009* reflects that he "took the lead" among his University friends, "organizing and coordinating" in ways he had not previously. In this way, self-determination appears to anchor program alumni's visions and motivation to achieve them by providing a confidence grounded in the successes of onboard life.

Concluding Thoughts

The perceived significance of the Class Afloat experience generates a felt disparity between the experience and all future experiences – including the daily experience of life at home. It is not surprising, then, that participants grieved upon return. Respondent stories highlight two themes as they reflect on the transition away from the Class Afloat experience and back to their home context: the experience was significant, and leaving it behind involves loss. The contrast between these two insights is severe – the more significant the experience, the greater the felt loss.

Exploring how participants perceive this loss appears to bring increased context to understanding the personal and social challenges they perceive as they return home. Further, exploring respondent stories to make sense of how participants perceive their response to the reintegration process – that felt loss and sense of being misunderstood as they return to their home context – shows promise as an avenue for additional insights regarding the transferability of personal and social growth experienced onboard.

As noted, the vision and intention components of Willard's (2002) model for transformation – empowered by an increasing sense of self-determination cultivated as participants endure the difficult transition to ship life and learn they can achieve more than they originally anticipated – continue to grow in life after Class Afloat. The challenge of reintegration presents a fresh opportunity for program alumni to push themselves toward new heights and secure the vision of life they have identified for themselves in light of the Class Afloat experience.

Ongoing personal and social growth, it seems, must stem from successfully engaging the appropriate means for executing the intention to live out that particular vision. Self-determination secures the vision and motivation through a belief that such a vision can be achieved. Given the personal and social successes achieved during the voyage, these new challenges can also be overcome.

Thus, for those who cultivated self-determination during their onboard experience, the gap between future success and failure at attempting to recreate the adventurous and socially rich context of Class Afloat in a post-experience life appears to depend on practicing the appropriate means – practical wisdom exercised alongside requisite virtues – rather than acquired vision or motivation. Said differently, adopting Tiberius' (2008) language, success lies in continuing to secure one's own value commitments (reflectively identifying one's vision and intention) through reflective practices.

Based on respondent stories, two types of means emerge as central to the kinds of personal and social growth program alumni continue to experience: conditions and practices. The next two chapters explore themes from respondent stories (in personal and social growth respectively) and analyze the connection of these themes to virtues (both moral and prudential) that program alumni perceive as having been catalyzed through Class Afloat. This analysis aims to identify the means by which participants pursue the life they have already identified – in light of their Class Afloat experience – particularly as that life relates to growth in Aristotelian notions of practical wisdom.

Chapter 8: A Second Look at Personal Challenges & Growth

Introduction

Just as the conditions and practices of ship life were perceived to have secured personal growth *during* the Class Afloat experience, the conditions and practices of post-voyage living connect to participant perceptions of ongoing personal development. Having discussed the role that self-determination plays in helping program alumni to construct a vision for life they consider to be worthy and empowering them with the intention to pursue it, this chapter highlights additional themes of perceived personal growth occurring post-voyage. Specifically, respondent stories highlight ongoing personal growth including values clarification, global perspective, and love for travel. These three themes are explored and related to the conditions and practices program alumni identify as present in their post-voyage lives – connecting these *means* (Willard 2002) to ongoing personal growth insofar as it is perceived to connect with the Class Afloat experience.

Clarifying Values

The perceived significance of Class Afloat in participant eyes correlates nicely with the kind of personal and social growth participants attribute to the experience. At the very least, Class Afloat seems to have invited participants to think differently about their world. *Gary 2009* notes, "Now, because of Class Afloat, I spend a lot of time thinking about how I want to live my life. There's such a variety of ways you can live. I'm constantly thinking, 'is that the right way? Is that suited for me?'"

By inviting participants to think about new ways of living, Class Afloat creates a context ripe for identifying and justifying value commitments – and reflecting on them regularly. For her purposes, Tiberius (2008) defines "value commitments" generously, including "activities, relationships, goals, aims, ideals, principles, and so on, whether moral, aesthetic, or prudential" (p. 24-5). Through reflection on value commitments such as

these during their Class Afloat experience, participants seem to clarify their own sense of self, and adopt new value commitments. Both *Rebecca 1995* and *Jennifer 1999* affirm something similar to clarity when they describe their experience with the phrase "I found myself," highlighting the important role this kind of values clarification can have on personal and social identities.

The return to a home context presents a second "disorienting dissonance" (Mezirow, 2000) at least partially because of this values clarification process. In a study of reverse culture shock in expedition participants, Allison et al. (2011) found that participants struggle with "isolation and loneliness" because they lack a community with "shared experience" – a finding they identify as consistent with other culture shock and reverse culture shock literature (Oberg, 1960; Rea, 2006). While this is consistent with respondent stories in this study (as discussed in Chapter 7), it does not tell the whole story. Not only were participants trying to re-acclimate with limited (or no) access to Class Afloat relationships, they were returning to a familiar context (home) with newly adopted lenses representative of the shifted values which were perceived by many respondents as both different from and superior to previously held perspectives. Thus, another facet of reverse culture shock, for Class Afloat respondents, appears to be the struggle participants experience as they try to reconcile new value commitments in their former cultural context. Collected stories suggest respondents struggle through this process – making decisions about how to express their new value commitments appropriately in their former cultural context.

This reconciling has been a particular challenge for *Jennifer 1999* who, having claimed, "I found myself" on Class Afloat goes on to add, "I haven't been able to say that again since." As noted in Chapter 7, *Thomas 1985* also remembers the tension well, reflecting, "When I got out I was fucked… Everything was different. I just saw things differently." Having survived "culture shock" on board Class Afloat by adjusting to new experiences and adopting new values, these respondents acknowledge the difficult, second "disorienting dissonance" (Mezirow, 2000); the reverse culture shock they experienced as they wrestled with how to apply their new value commitments in old contexts.

Global Perspective

Equipped with newly adopted values, which were cultivated on board and tightly linked to the emergent culture of their cohort, participants return home to encounter their former cultural contexts head on. These newly acquired value commitments were not just perceived as superior to old value commitments, but also superior to value commitments held by their peers at home. Having a broader global perspective, for instance, led some respondents to become arrogant – presuming their value commitments were more accurate then those held by others. Consider the perceived struggle expressed by both *Gary 2009* and *Mary 1996* to remain humble upon return, noted in Chapter 7. *Gary 2009* goes further, noting:

> The first initial hiccups to coming home were things like dressing and bathing, as ridiculous as that sounds. I mean I was by no means Tarzan, but the hints came pretty quickly from my family, like, it was my birthday and I got a razor. And you can be so closed off to other perspectives, like a Clydesdale, you don't even realize, 'Oh, okay, that's the message here.' I was just unaware of a lot of things, like how I was being perceived. I thought I had everything figured out and, you know, I'm thinking to myself, 'why is it people busy themselves about these silly things when you can clearly get by?' So I guess I was more minimalist than I had been. While I was in University, I had this inflated, not ego, but this sense that I had seen more of the world, but you know, gradually other students, regardless of whether or not they had done this program, people are curious and they find ways to travel, so maybe that wore off over time and as I acclimatized.

Mary 1996 identifies similarly, describing the sense of superiority she felt when she arrived at university. In her mind, Class Afloat had given her a broader global perspective than her university peers. As a result, *Mary 1996* felt she was more equipped to make judgments about what mattered in life. She reflects:

> I went to school at Brigham Young, which is a great school, and I was so frustrated with my classmates who – their world was so small. They call Provo happy valley because everything is good and everyone is happy. I was going to get married and have my little family, and here I had just come back from this huge thing and I thought, 'Your lives are so petty and shallow.' So, I had a hard time in some ways – it was the prom thing – yes it's important as a life event, but is it that important? There is more to life, you know? That was difficult for me, coming back to school. I don't know how you could do [Class Afloat] your junior year and come back to high school.

Further, stories from both *Mary 1996* and *Gary's 2009* connect with two of Tiberius' (2008) reflective virtues (which she considers constituents of practical wisdom). First, they display the kind of openness to perspective shifts that Tiberius (2008) calls *attentional flexibility*, or grasping "the right reasons and values at the appropriate time and [changing] perspective accordingly" (p. 79). In both cases, respondents share story examples of engagement in practical perspectives. These examples are not particularly flattering, displaying respondent's haughty application of new value commitments inappropriately upon return from Class Afloat. In each case, however, the respondent's story reveals a participant who is willing to adopt a reflective perspective, stepping away from the particular story and evaluating how the behavior exhibited in that moment fails to align with the long-term, stable value commitments held by that participant.

Having a broadened global perspective also led some respondents toward a perceived awareness of their privilege relative to others – privileged to attend Class Afloat, and privileged to live in places with freedom and economic opportunity. Several respondents discussed the guilt they wrestled through as they reconciled their new global perspective with their former cultural context. Reconciling the poverty he encountered during his Class Afloat experience, *Gary 2009* comments:

> I had gone to all these countries where people were hungry. Maybe I was a little more jaded and cynical after the experience, in a weird way. I remember going to Senegal – Class Afloat still does a two-week program there. And even with that, I feel pangs of guilt about it. The idea is great, but often what we get is a rich white kid scooping up a poor black kid for a photo opportunity and we call it charity. I don't think I fully unpacked that until a year afterward. Honestly, I don't think it's over even now. So there are some things I can be pretty certain about now. I felt more mature for having done [Class Afloat]. I felt like I was more attune to the needs of a group, and that kind of thing. But as far as this guilt complex and whatever, that's still there and I don't know where it ends really. Which isn't to say this has totally rocked my life, but in certain ways it has. Like some days I'll think, 'oh that's probably because of Class Afloat that I'm thinking this way.

For *Gary 2009*, the meaning-making process continues to unfold years after returning from Class Afloat. He continues to process his exposure to poverty on Class Afloat – through individual reflection and group deliberation – trying to form new judgments

about how he ought to engage economic challenges at a global level, and trying to make sense of his own guilt about having been privileged. Years after the experience, *Gary 2009* continues to experience something like reverse culture shock – a process that requires time and reflection (Rea, 2006; Allison et al., 2011).

Additionally, *Gary's 2009* story suggests his on-going ability to shift between practical and reflective perspectives. Based on his new value commitments, informed for better and worse by his Class Afloat experience, it appears that *Gary's 2009* reflective perspective continues to assess alignment between his behaviors and his value commitments (Tiberius, 2008). He reflects:

> In ways Class Afloat has done wonderful things for my life and other people, but in some ways, for better or worse, I find myself – not more cynical or jaded – just more skeptical or maybe inquisitive I guess? For me now, I've come out of school and feel pretty lucky to have been privileged. Maybe I wouldn't be as inquisitive about that if it wasn't for Class Afloat. I definitely wouldn't be, actually. Yeah, I never thought facing poverty on the trip would have been a problem when I went on the program and I didn't even think of it at the time, but the year afterward, for whatever reason, I had a serious guilt complex. I would never say like post-traumatic stress disorder or something like that, like, 'poor me I saw starving people,' but definitely had an effect or an aftertaste – something that came later – that I didn't expect.

As noted in Chapter 4, the work duties and schedule of ship life afforded participants regular practice at *attentional flexibility* – informal training in the ability to align one's dispositions and emotions with the activity at hand, and to take time when appropriate to reflect more critically on one's own values (Tiberius, 2008). *Gary's 2009* story suggests this practice continues – at least insofar as he continues to process the impact of Class Afloat on his own sense of self and social responsibility. It speaks to *Gary's 2009* personal pursuit of more robust values, increasingly good deliberation and a desire that better thinking would lead him toward right action. This is significant given the role critical reflection plays in the development of one's own set of values – particularly for respondents as they return from the trip and move past reintegration.

As for being privileged to attend Class Afloat, *Gary 2009* adds, "Maybe I felt guilty because I was at University reading about global inequality and all the rest. It could also

be that I just came back from this program that had a big-ticket price on it. I felt guilty about that." Similarly, *Curtis 2011* expresses his own guilt over getting to attend Class Afloat. He notes, "After Class Afloat I felt privileged and lucky – even a little guilt about getting to have this experience."

Beyond arrogance and guilt, participants identified additional shifting values associated with their newly broadened global perspective. For instance, *Erin 2002*, *Jess 2008*, and *Kim 2005*, all mention the geographic wonder of traveling by boat. The experience of traveling by tall ship inspired a shift in value commitments associated with space and geographic perspective. For *Erin 2002*, the size of the ship went from feeling cramped to being "enough" – a value shift toward minimalism that is reflected in her vocational choices since Class Afloat. Not only did she return to Class Afloat as a staff member, she has also intentionally sought similar environments, with small spaces and intimate teams, to facilitate humanitarian aid programs. *Jess 2008*, shared how Class Afloat helped her conceptualize "just how big the world really is." Particularly in light of how long it takes to sail a tall ship from one place to another. *Kim 2005* comments similarly:

> I remember the first time I was on a plane after Class Afloat, just being in awe that I was able to go from Toronto to Europe in half a day. It was incredible to understand the technological advances from that perspective, having sailed across the Atlantic. So, there are a lot of ways having that perspective and that experience allows you to see the changes in globalization that have occurred in the last few centuries and to really appreciate that.

Kim 2005 goes on to credit her broadened global perspective for spurring new academic interests, vocational choices, her personal sense of identity, and new social sensitivities:

> For me, I developed a really strong interest in history and anthropology that I wouldn't have had without Class Afloat. I ended up working for two years for an adventure travel company selling affordable backpacking trips in large part because of Class Afloat. I really believe there is more out there than all-inclusive resorts. By going on a trip like Class Afloat, I went to places I wouldn't go by myself and discovered they are amazing – and I never would have heard of them if not for Class Afloat. I definitely think there is an alternative view of the global self you can develop, and a different sense of what authenticity means when you visit somewhere – you're very critical of how your view of places is guided by certain things, like visiting local heritage sites or evaluating how things are

> portrayed in the news, or how different countries might view each other based on recent events.

Beyond the impact of a broadened global perspective, participants adopted a variety of value commitments related to the virtues the experience cultivated. Practicing courage during Class Afloat, for instance, empowered *Ashley 2003* embrace situations which challenge her desire for control. Going into the experience, she remembers deriving a high sense of stability from being able to control her environment. As a result, she describes her pre-experience self as a perfectionist, relying on a sense of control to manage her experiences. Ashley 2003 perceives that through the Class Afloat experience, as she learned to manage her own fears around stability and navigate experiences that she could not control, she lost her desire for stable and controllable environments. Looking back on how those value commitments shifted, Ashley 2003 reflects:

> One of the values of Class Afloat for me is the way you have to let go of perfectionism and just let things be. I think for me, that's why I like these types of experiences so much, because you can just let yourself go into them – it's not like you're in some controllable home environment where you are able to make this just so and do everything just right. Everything can go to shit, and that's just the way it is, and you can see the fun in that through crazy traveling or living abroad – at least in my experience. When I went on Class Afloat, my grades dropped quite a bit – I wasn't getting the straight 'A's I was used to – and it was really good for me, because everything else was so great and it allowed me to let go of that a bit. When you lose an aspect of control it's freeing. It's comforting to have a sense of control in your life, but what I've found really empowering is not having control, and being at peace when you are in the midst of craziness – and enjoying that as the ultimate place you can be. Learning to be calm and able to move through – being adaptable. Traveling – the Class Afloat experience – it's a really great way to become adaptable and feel the freedom of being able to adapt to any situation.

This new value – seeking situations where control over external circumstances is limited and finding freedom in that chaos – has defined much of *Ashley's 2003* travel since. She goes on to highlight specific examples of this new value commitment in action:

> I spent a summer in Mexico and I just went down there by myself and didn't know anyone, and I was living in this big Mexican city just working, and I think I got confidence to do that from the Class Afloat experience. And I see that as a

> similar sort of example of what you can get through, and starting completely fresh in a scary setting, and then having great relationships with people and a place at the end of it. That was another formative chunk of time. Doing the traveling Master's [degree] was similar – it was a lot of time compressed into two years. I think the theme seems to be, for me at least, going to a completely new location, with new people, and moving through that until it becomes something that I know; just starting off completely fresh and then creating relationships with people and a place over time, and what that continues to offer me in terms of growth.

The conclusion *Ashley 2003* draws in this story suggests that Class Afloat presented her with a new experience arrangement that generated significant personal and social formation. Her pursuit of similar experiences since Class Afloat further suggests she has realigned value commitments that prioritize these sorts of experiences. As noted in Chapter 4, it is from this framework of clarified values and deliberation capable of driving action that self-determination emerges. *Ashley 2003* exemplifies this sort of self-determination at least insofar as she has committed herself to on-going personal growth in a way she has seen work previously. *Ashley's 2003* story, similar to *Mary 1996* and *Gary 2009*, merits connection to Tiberius' (2008) *attentional flexibility*. Personal growth for *Ashley 2003*, had much to do with her becoming comfortable in the chaos. In fact, it was this perceived lack of control which really freed her to engage the appropriate practical perspective – taking a *carpe diem* approach to the experience.

Love of Travel

The most evident value commitment adopted by respondents was an overwhelming commitment to ongoing travel following their Class Afloat experience. All respondents credit Class Afloat with inspiring their ongoing passion for sailing and international travel. As *Rebecca 1995* quips:

> Class Afloat gave me the itch to travel. I haven't really stopped since class Afloat. I've done a lot of sailing trips. Before Class Afloat I had sailed a little. I got my white sail and that sort of thing but I had an incident that scared me so I stopped. But after Class Afloat, it gave me the confidence to get back out there and start sailing again. I share a boat with my family. We compete and we take a lot of sailing vacations – we've done the Grenadines and maybe Croatia next

> year. I've been back to visit New Zealand twice since our Class Afloat trip, backpacking there for a few months this last summer.

Like *Rebecca 1995*, respondents repeatedly identified not just a desire to travel more, but an "itch" to scratch. Further, all participants talked about subsequent sailing and international travel adventures they have had since Class Afloat. Similar to *Kim's 2005* shift away from perfectionism, *Scott 2011* shares his pursuit of spontaneity in travel alongside his value commitment to serve others in travel – both inspired by Class Afloat:

> I wanted to go to Nepal for two weeks, but I also wanted to help, and I thought two weeks would be selfish – because what can you really do to help in two weeks – so I went for a month and taught English. Just before I left for Nepal I had a Class Afloat friend who was visiting me here invite me to join her en-route to Europe, so I joined her on a trip to Prague, then we ended up in Dubai, went to the Maldives, and then New Dehli, and then to Nepal. All those things we just planned a few days before I left, but hey, it worked out. I ended up in Nepal and it was probably the best trip I have ever done – probably not as good as Class Afloat, but still on the same level. The whole trip was so poorly planned it made the experience just awesome. It made it absolutely awesome. Through that poor planning, somehow I found the greatest opportunities.

Mary 1996 identifies the travel bug as the most significant impact Class Afloat made on her life.

> I think one of the biggest changes was the travel bug. For up until just a couple years ago I left the country at least once a year every year. I do tend to get antsy doing the same thing for too long and a trip overseas is a great cure for that. And I think that's something I need. I mean I was interested in the world before [Class Afloat], but I think where it became more of a – I don't want to call it a need because is it really a need? I'd say [it was] something that was hard to ignore. Like the first year I didn't go overseas I bought a house, and I had lived in Egypt for six months the year before that, so it was okay. Even when I was pregnant with my daughter I had to take a trip down to Costa Rica because, it was like, you know, I still need to do this. And then I decided to take my daughter to England this summer. And I think that's a big thing that comes directly from Class Afloat – that travel bug.

Linking her ongoing love of travel to her broadened global perspective, *Mary 1996* goes on to suggest her travel bug really is a "need" after all – and a normative one. She advises:

> Another thing I tell people is, 'you should leave your own country at least once and go somewhere very different. If you're in the United States, [then] Mexico and Canada don't count.' Just that experience of broadening your horizons, I think that's invaluable. You learn what you have good here and what you maybe don't have so good here. I think it allows you to have more appreciation for your own life.

Similarly, *Kim 2005* feels an ongoing desire for adventurous exploration. She reflects:

> I think there are a lot of things we can learn from just showing up in a port city you know nothing about and just exploring and learning about it through being their physically rather than planning out your itinerary in a guide book based on what other people have said and then deciding that's what you're going to do… It makes me have some wanderlust for places that are undiscovered.

For *Ashley 2003*, Class Afloat was the catalyst for a life of travel. She reflects:

> As my first time away from home, [Class Afloat] was the experience that really jut got me hooked on travel and new experiences and living in new places. It created an itch – a travel itch. So I was just aching to get away again and try something new.

In contrast, *Gary 2009* notes:

> As a kid I moved around a lot, so the chance to be more nomadic appealed to me. Some of my mates had to have their arms twisted by their parents to even go on Class Afloat, and most of them – maybe for me too – we were looking to have one big year and then settle down. That didn't exactly happen, and CA has certainly made life less predictable.

For many respondents, it wasn't just a love of travel that added to life. Like *Mary 1996*, traveling satisfied deeper urges for adventure that were primarily encouraged during their time aboard Class Afloat. As *Gary 2009* continues:

> Even through [our] university years, lots of us were still bouncing around here and there still trying to squeeze in some more experiential time. In a weird way, I thought maybe my itch would be scratched if I got out again. I came back from Class Afloat, did 4 years [on the] West Coast at the University of Victoria, and after that I went to Japan to teach English for a year. And I thought maybe I would kick it – maybe the travel bug would be done with, but I don't know that it worked at all (*laughing*). I don't blame Class Afloat or anything, and I'm grateful for being curious or whatever.

Embedded in *Gary 2009's* reflection is a sense that the disparity between pace of life on the ship versus being at home presents participants with a new challenge. As Chapter 4 and 5 discuss, it is the context and program driven challenges of Class Afloat that foster virtues like responsibility, self-discipline, courage, self-awareness, perspective, *attentional flexibility*, and humility. The adventure itself cultivates virtuous habits. Participants invited into these practices during their Class Afloat return to a home context that feels largely devoid of adventure. *Scott 2011* remembers:

> Everything we do every day seems so normal. But on the boat, nothing normal becomes your normal. Like when we were in Africa, we had no water and couldn't shower. Or hey, we just got into the Bahamas and then we are off to Bermuda. Or having problems with math? You can walk down the hall and talk with your teacher. Or hey, I don't have to tie down my laptop with ropes at home. All the 'normals' change and that's difficult to adjust to. Your perspective toward stuff changes because being on the boat is so different.

Or as *Erin 2002* sees it, "Life at home is boring." She goes on, "When I returned from Class Afloat all the challenges were gone. I had taken on broader and bigger expectations for my life. I wanted the challenge back in my life so I started to pursue it." Like *Erin 2002*, the invitation to a bigger life fell flat for many respondents when they returned to their home context. As *Carter 2011* recalls, returning home felt like "loss of momentum" without the friendships and adventure the onboard context had facilitated. For many, including *Erin 2002*, the answer to boredom at home was to chase more adventure. She reflects:

> Class Afloat was the single most significant experience of my life. It has shaped me the most – the constant challenge, no running away, being done with pretending, learning to rely on others. After University I returned to Class Afloat as a worker. Since then I make it a point to move every year for the Humanitarian Aid work I do. It provides me with a new context and two to three colleagues. I love that each year is an adventure, learning to adapt to new relationships, rules, and cultures. It would be far too difficult to return to normal life.

Erin 2002 was not alone in her attempt to chase adventure. As *Ashley 2003* notes, "Class Afloat is this exploration that gets built into you – and then you have to keep chasing that. I've definitely seen that with a lot of my shipmates and other years as well." She

too has continued to travel each year since her sailing experience. Tracing her life since Class Afloat, she recalls:

> For undergraduate I moved to Montreal and just did a lot of traveling and internships in different places and studying other parts of the world as my academic focus. Then I went away to Europe…and I did a traveling Masters where I went from country to country – which was kind of similar to a Class Afloat experience actually. We lived in 4 different countries and it was just similar in the sense of traveling to different places and also in the bonds we formed as a group, going through these experiences together. So every four months I had the itch to move or go somewhere. The way I sort of see the story of my life is, I'd say for a good ten years, so from 17-27, starting with Class Afloat and moving onwards, I was in a new place – whether it was living there or just having some sort of big trip – on a semester-like basis. And that just carried on. The more I did it the more I just really got into that movement. Then when I finished my Masters degree in the middle of 2012, I decided to move home and look for work in Victoria or Vancouver, and as soon as I got back I just wanted to leave again and have a new experience somewhere else.

Whereas chasing adventure satisfied *Erin 2002*'s itch to fulfill "broader and bigger expectations" for her life, chasing adventure presented new challenges for *Ashley 2003*. Specifically, she attributes Class Afloat with inspiring what she sees as a largely counterproductive sense of "nomadism" – a sense that she hopes to reconcile in herself. She reflects:

> Over the last year and a half I've been undergoing a real attempt at just settling that nomadism in myself, and trying to set some roots down in one place…Class Afloat definitely ignited this sense of movement within me that definitely has taken some effort to settle down, because you do get hooked on that excitement and new adventures – or at least I did. I guess what I'm trying to say is that the travel and living in different places that I've experienced since Class Afloat I attributed a lot to that experience, and just sort of the taste I was given at a young age and also like I said, the confidence to feel like I could do whatever I wanted which I think is a good thing, but also I've had to tame it down a bit because I almost became too hooked on movement. Once you get that taste of all these new places and moving around it becomes hard to settle down in one place.

In addition to *Ashley's 2003* present desire to retire the nomadism and begin to "settle down," she identifies some of the practical implications her years of travel present – especially as it pertains to vocational goals:

> I wouldn't say it's a negative, but in the last year or so I just felt it was time to put down some roots – and I don't mean in the sense of buying a house and getting a dog. It was more like I've had all these great experiences – whether employment, academic, or personal – and when you put them on a resume – I think it all came about because I was starting to look for work and I've done all these different things, but you know, I haven't had two years of stable work experience doing one thing because I've just been jumping from one opportunity to the next. So I think practically that's how it started to hit me. It's like, I think it's time to start digging my teeth into something a bit more consistently. You don't need to be in one place to do that, but having roots in one place and just kind of having a consistent focus can help with that – not that the things I did along the way didn't have meaning, they did, and they all fit together, but I started to feel that it was time to have a bit more focus and to commit myself to one purpose, if that makes sense. But I also just decided to go back to school, so I'm getting my PhD now. That's a four-year focus, right?

In sum, *Ashley 2003* notes:

> I don't know that Class Afloat necessarily made me more successful career-wise from a traditional standpoint. Had I not attended Class Afloat, I think I would have stuck to something a bit safer, in terms of what I trained to do and what I ended up doing in my work. Just going on the boat and being exposed to all that travel I've just kind of chased that since then which has been good experientially, but in terms of locking down a set career for me, it's been a bit all over the place. I credit that to Class Afloat in a good and bad way.

Gary 2009 perceives similar vocational challenges connected to his Class Afloat inspired experience chasing. Reflecting on connections to his sense of personal identity he suggests:

> My life hasn't really taken on momentum yet, you know? I mean so-and-so is a something, and I'm not there yet. I guess Class Afloat fits as a bookend to the front of University and my year in Japan is the other bookend. That's a cool way of looking at it, but it's just too neat and tidy to just think of it that way. It's still something I say I am constantly unpacking or thinking about – especially when I don't expect to.

Kim 2005, a few years removed from *Gary 2009*, looks back remembering how she walked through that life stage. She chased experiences through her undergraduate and graduate studies before transitioning to a more traditional corporate job. Though the tug of "wanderlust" has not left her, she identifies a perceived contradiction between the

kind of travel she desires and the demands of adult life and traditional employment. *Kim 2005* reflects:

> Once you start working and making money it's easy to get on an established track. I mean I can plan a trip for one or two weeks, but if I want to do something longer term that is very adventurous, that is much more difficult to realize – like wouldn't it be nice to live in a different country. Right now I can think that, but when I was younger I might have made plans to actually take the trip the next year. So the desire to embrace those experiences is still strong, but the opportunities seem to be waning.

Even further removed from his Class Afloat experience, *Thomas 1985* appears more focused on passing his values forward to the next generation, shaping his children's travel through intentional experiences that "avoid resorts" and "connect with the local culture."

While the lure of adventure travel comes up in each story, the approach to addressing that passion varies across respondents. In any case, the value shift is apparent: Class Afloat participants view on-going, authentic travel as an important part of their lives. Alongside global perspective, Class Afloat respondents testify to shifted values commitments that direct them toward a new way of living. This new vision, in turn, impacts participant decision-making going forward.

Vision, Intention, & Means

Respondent stories suggest that, in life after Class Afloat, the ongoing process of values clarification, a shift in global perspective, and a new or renewed love of travel each impact how participants reintegrate into their home context. Following Willard (2002), Class Afloat appears to invite participants into a particular vision for life – to live a bigger, more adventurous life. Further, many participants express an ongoing intention to continue living that way – spurred on, as noted in chapter 7, by ongoing growth in self-determination.

As noted above, shifting values give shape to this new vision and as well as securing the ongoing practice of particular means which appear to have been catalyzed by the voyage

and are now transferring as adopted practices in life at home. For instance, *Mary 1996*, *Erin 2002*, *Ashley 2003* all identify "wanderlust" as an adopted value that they continue to pursue (albeit in different ways). This shapes both the conditions they pursue in life, and the practices they habituate to uphold this value. All three ladies pursued scholastic and vocational futures that guarantee a life of ongoing travel.

For *Ashley 2003*, the pursuit of travel has shaped her prioritization of personal growth practices – emphasizing attentional flexibility and perspective over and against responsibility and discipline (at least in the traditional senses she represents in her story). The conflict arising later requires further values clarification as she determines which values to prioritize presently. For *Ashley 2003*, this reprioritization reflects appropriate, ongoing practice of practical wisdom. Her decisionmaking process is reflective, and includes outside perspectives from mentors – like her parents and former educators – suggesting ongoing growth in the deliberative functions associated with practical wisdom.

For *Erin 2002*, a commitment to vocational travel akin to Class Afloat (small cohort, new location every two years, and a shared mission) has generated opportunities to practice courage, attentional flexibility, and perspective. It appears these values also cohere with the ongoing practice of discipline, responsibility, and self-awareness (as she understands them in her story). Collectively, these practices provide a solid foundation for the ongoing practice of practical wisdom as *Erin 2002* continues to pursue the vision for life she has identified.

Aligned with these findings, nearly all program alumni reflect positively about the personal growth they have experienced since life on board Class Afloat. Moreover, all respondents confirm explicitly that their vision for the kind of life they continue to identify as worth living and pursue is shaped significantly by what they experienced onboard Class Afloat.

Conclusion

The process of identifying a life worth living is foundational to growth in practical wisdom. Program alumni report acquiring a new vision for life through their sail voyage. Furthermore, stories suggest this vision is motivated by growth in self-determination – a disposition acquired largely by successful engagement with a variety of practices while aboard Class Afloat. Additional personal growth – in practices like courage, *attentional flexibility*, perspective, self-awareness, responsibility, and discipline – appears to flow out of the reintegration process, as program alumni further clarify their vision for life and those values that will offer the greatest chance of successfully pursuing it.

This chapter discusses the ways that clarified values – especially regarding global perspective and a love for travel – impact these practices as program alumni arrange their lives to create opportunities for ongoing practice of the habits which are meaningful to them. Collectively, the pursuit of these practices strengthens the foundation required to make practical judgments – mediating the right virtues in the right way at the right times. This personal growth, however, does not occur in a vacuum. To the contrary, it is the relational learning which occurs through Class Afloat that provides context for practical wisdom to develop as program alumni continue to mature both socially and personally.

Chapter 9: A Second Look at Social Challenges & Growth

Introduction

Just as the conditions and practices of ship life secured social growth during the Class Afloat experience, the conditions and practices of post-voyage living connect to participant perceptions of ongoing social development. This chapter highlights specific themes of perceived social growth occurring following the Class Afloat experience which are present in respondent stories – constructing or reconstructing friendships and communities. These themes are explored, and linked to the conditions and practices respondents identify in their post-voyage life, connecting these *means* (Willard, 2002) to ongoing personal growth insofar as it is perceived to connect with the Class Afloat experience.

Cultivating Friendship & Community Post-Experience

Just as feeling understood accelerated relationship building during the Class Afloat experience, moments post-experience when participants felt understood or known served to ease their transition back into their former lives. Working toward this feeling of being known or understood took varying forms. Across stories, respondents' approaches to community building post-experience tend to fit three broad categories: a) those who continued to foster Class Afloat friendships as their primary community, b) those who successfully constructed a new community of friendships following their Class Afloat experience, and c) two outliers.

Holding On to Class Afloat

As noted previously, access to social media, email, and text messaging – for more recent Class Afloat voyagers –eased the difficulties associated with transition onto the boat by limiting feelings of isolation and dissonance from life prior to sailing. In turn, they also empowered participants to virtually maintain their Class Afloat community as they head back home. For many recent program alumni, this virtual connectedness encouraged past

participants to regain proximity for the sake of community building. Given these technological advances and the related ease of maintaining virtual connectedness, recent participants are better able to satisfy their "desire for continuing course community post-course" (D'Amato & Krasny, 2011, p. 249).

Scott 2011 discusses networking with program alumni as he planned several international excursions following the Class Afloat experience. Whether he is looking for a place to stay, or recruiting companions, the idea of global travel remains tightly linked to his Class Afloat friendships.

Following two years at a small university in Vermont, *Carter 2011* packed everything and moved his life to Montreal to be closer to his Class Afloat community. Despite the proximity and isolation of his University experience – contextual conditions leveraged by the Class Afloat program to accelerate onboard community building – Carter had not been able to construct a network of friendships with the relational depth he had experienced during Class Afloat. Two things in particular motivated *Carter 2011* to recapture his Class Afloat community rather than continue working to build something similar at University: the shared history because of "everything we went through together," and the "authenticity that comes from being vulnerable together." What started with weekend visits led to relocation for the sake of community and friendships.

This story – particularly among younger respondents – is common. *Lars 2009* and *Gary 2008* both leaned on Class Afloat friendships for housing partnerships through their university experiences. Regarding rooming with Class Afloat friends at University, *Gary 2008* notes, "There was none of this song and dance of stepping around eggshells and feeling like you've got to tread lightly. It was just comfort." Similarly, *Lars 2009* reports a network of university friendships built on the foundation of Class Afloat relationships. He adds, "Class Afloat continues to shape who I am, at age 23. I still have friends from the trip, and the experiences I took away from that year come up in conversations more often than I would have expected."

These program alumni share the advantage of facing the reintegration challenge together, continuing to build their community and friendships from the foundation of

their Class Afloat experience. For earlier participants who had limited or no access to emerging technologies like email and social media, the fight to hold friendships together took a slightly different form. *Ashley 2003* recalls maintaining her friendships through formal and informal visits with members of her cohort:

> I created some intense bonds with people. Experiencing all those things with those people is what was the most valuable – just all the memories we formed together. And we still are all connected. There was a period of time after the ship and for about five or six years where we had regular reunions and all got together – especially when I was living in Montreal where a lot of people were living on the east coast. I haven't seen any – well, I saw one last year. Those bonds are still there. If anyone from my year is in the same place as me or I'm in the same place as them and I know that or they know that, we always make a point of reaching out and seeing each other. So relationships and friendships were pretty central.

Unlike *Carter 2011*, who moved to facilitate proximity, *Ashley 2003* has seen the lack of proximity to friends take its toll on her efforts to maintain and increase depth in those friendships over time. She was, however, able to leverage existing connectedness to ease her post-experience transition – and not just with classmates. She adds, "I liked my teachers. I was closer to a few of them than others, and I remained friends with them after, visiting a few in Vancouver." These visits served more as touch points to remember and contextualize the original experience than as moments fostering increasing depth within her Class Afloat network.

To a lesser degree, respondents from earlier voyages have engaged these emerging technologies to establish similar virtual connections with their cohorts – reestablishing connections founded in the shared experience of Class Afloat. This is certainly true for *Mary 1996*, who connects frequently with three "semi-regular friends" from Class Afloat. Having reconnected through Facebook, *Mary 1996* shares:

> I'm one of those people that have very few close, intimate friends and then a bunch of acquaintances… My friends are people that I talk to maybe once a year. I'm horrible at keeping up with people – not because I don't care, but because I don't have time. The people I keep in touch with I've been friends with for years. In my community at Class Afloat, I had a couple of people I was really close friends with – we hung out all the time when we went into port, we stayed in closer contact afterwards. I'm not on Facebook all that much anymore but you

> know, I connected with them on Facebook. So I have a couple people – probably three – that I keep in semi-regular contact with from Class Afloat.

Like *Carter 2011*, *Ashley 2003* and *Mary's 1996* friendships are grounded in the shared experience of Class Afloat, but they do not reflect the same reliance on authenticity and vulnerability. Instead, they emphasize utility. For instance, in one situation, *Mary 1996* recalls:

> I got a call from one of them saying, 'Hey, three of us are going to this ball, we're all dudes, and we need a girl so we don't looking like creepy dudes. Do you want to come?' And I was like, 'Yeah, Absolutely.' So, things like that and catching up on the latest things going on in life, rather than "Hey, how's it going" and chatting about the day-to-day.

Maintaining these friendships in a somewhat distant and disconnected way fits what *Mary 1996* has already suggested about her approach to friendships – especially in terms of maintaining many acquaintances. This is why it is of particular interest to note that Mary consistently identifies these program alumni as friends, not acquaintances. The strength of their history together elevates them, in her perception, above mere acquaintances. It is clear, however, that the connections lack the *mirroring* Brogan (2002) identifies as essential to Aristotle's (1985) notion of virtue friendship – whereby friendship with these program alumni would encourage Mary to cultivate her own virtues.

On the contrary, her own story suggests these are clearly friendships of pleasure and utility: seeking convenience through a place to stay and a fun evening out. *Ashley's 2003* friendships appear to have transitioned in similar fashion over the years. As the shared experience inches further into the past, the connectedness it fosters also seems to shrink. Without the regular dialogue characteristic of friendship, it is difficult to maintain the Aristotelian mirroring that allows for reflection of values and growth. Instead, participants appear to become increasingly content with remembering their shared history together; satisfied to reflect more on who they *were* than who they *are* to one another, or even who they *are becoming* because of each other.

While *Mary 1996* has established other friendships – notably through her marriage and work – it is clear from her story that Class Afloat friendships have not developed to that

extent. Similar to others who sailed before technology simplified efforts to remain connected virtually, *Mary 1996* seems to have lacked the proximity – virtual or physical – necessary to foster that kind of depth with her sailing cohort. The same could be said for *Ashley 2003*, *Erin 2002*, *Rebecca 1995*, and others who sailed on earlier voyages.

Creating New Community

As referenced in stories from both *Gary 2008* and *Lars 2009*, some participants leveraged their Class Afloat experience as the primary foundation for further relationship building with the same community – or a relevant subset of friendships therein. But for many respondents, the Class Afloat community ceased as abruptly as the voyage.

Despite saying, "I still care about folks on the boat – lots of people I wouldn't have gravitated towards in regular life, so that was fun to get to know people with different personalities and interests than I had prior," in regards to his Class Afloat friendships, *Arthur's 1999* story suggests he maintains little to no connection with his program alumni cohort. He notes, "I still think on Class Afloat fairly often. I'm not really in touch with any of my classmates, but I think of them often." This abrupt disconnection from his cohort does not suggest weak or absent friendships. To the contrary, recalling his reflections in previous chapters, *Arthur 1999* identifies the social challenges as both the most difficult and rewarding aspect of his experience. More specifically, he comments:

> Community was hard – being surrounded by people all the time was the hardest part – but it was rewarding. I still think about a lot of my classmates, and still consider them very good friends even if we aren't in touch anymore, so I think the community was an essential. It was really important and really good. I think everyone left really caring about each other.

Though community played a significant role in *Arthur's 1999* Class Afloat experience, friendships did not extend beyond his time onboard. It's difficult to pinpoint why *Arthur 1999* was able to walk away from his on-board community with such casualness. Perhaps, like *Rebecca 1995*, and *Mary 1996*, maintaining connectedness was too difficult in the absence of technologies like texting and social media. Or, perhaps the Class Afloat community experience was simply a place for *Arthur 1999* to learn about

community and about himself. Regardless, the more important question is whether *Arthur 1999* has been able to construct a similar meaningful network of relationships since his time on Class Afloat – and was that new construct influenced by learning and practice afforded by his onboard experience.

Given the difficulty of reintegration, and the challenges associated with maintaining program alumni friendships (even virtually), it bears asking whether or not the Class Afloat experience equips or empowers participants, like *Arthur 1999*, to foster similar communities going forward. Like others, he notes connection to folks he wouldn't normally be friends with – a change in perspective that he believes has "served him well since" sailing with Class Afloat. Similarly, *Jess 2008* recalls that Class Afloat taught her a lot about people and friendships, though she resists complimenting the community building she experienced during her voyage. She notes it was through the "false and forced community" she experienced onboard that she observed "the ugliness of gossip and bullying." *Jess 2008* remembers many from her cohort confiding in her, and while that confidence opened her eyes to the relational dysfunction, it also shifted her "perspective about the kind of friendship" she wanted to spend time pursuing. She reports:

> My college memories are stronger because of the friendships I developed. Maybe it was because I had longer with those friends. On Class Afloat there were cliques, I was left out at port, and the community was forced. I learned to be less picky about friends – it completely changed my perspective on friendship. At college, I settled in with people I could trust.

Like *Arthur 1999*, *Jess 2008* emphasizes the ways she grew up through the Class Afloat experience – learning to sail, "thinking about life more abstractly", and becoming "more reflective" – alongside the social challenges and loneliness. In both cases, a richer community was found outside of Class Afloat. Equally, both perceive Class Afloat as having provided some foundational lessons that support that later community building – evidencing some takeaways from the good and bad they experienced. Perhaps Class Afloat engaged *Jess 2008* in challenges she had not experienced previously. Perhaps her previous experiences on a swim team had already offered her a positive model for a

flourishing community, and Class Afloat simply highlighted struggles she had not previously encountered.

Stories for both *Jess 2008* and *Arthur 1999* suggest that both perceive the social development they experienced through Class Afloat – particularly the friendships and community they experienced on board – to have directly impacted how they have approached community building and friendship since. Many respondents affirm this sentiment, discussing friendships they have cultivated and communities they have engaged since stepping off the boat.

Ashley 2003 identifies a strong link between her learning on Class Afloat and the construction of meaningful relationships since. She reflects on the process of moving from unknown to known, commenting on how the experience has equipped her:

> Moving from the first impressions, you know, when you first meet someone and you just have that instant first snapshot of who they are, because you can only base your impression of them on so much. Going into [Class Afloat] everyone was a new face, and at first you don't know anyone in any way, but by the end of the trip you know every single person and everything about them as if they are your closest family. It was a big theme of the experience, just seeing and feeling that transformation – learning how well you can get to know any stranger. And that, like many other parts of the experience, added a sort of confidence to my life – and I'm sure to many other people's – that you can go into any group of people and with the right amount of time they will become potentially your best friends or family. It was my first time going away from home. Since then I think I've been able to go to a lot of new places, and start fresh, and create new relationships – really meaningful relationships with people – just from the confidence I gained that first time when I was 17, knowing that it was something that anyone could do. So that relationship component was a huge theme and highlight for me.

Since Class Afloat, *Ashley 2003* has developed meaningful relationships in a variety of situations. Many contained the same contextual conditions as Class Afloat. Her undergraduate experience was residential and included a major specific assignment overseas. Similarly, her graduate school experience was a two-year travelling program studying in Europe. In both cases proximity and isolation were significant factors, but as her story above reflects, she identifies a third constituent as primary: time together.

Similarly, *Kim 2005* leveraged proximity, shared goals, and time to cultivate community during her graduate school experience:

> I did my Master's in Museum Studies, and everyone who studied Museum Studies – there were 40 of us – seemed very interested in the ideas of community, and of meaning making, and cultural heritage, and even how it extends to tourism. There was a really strong sense of community there and I felt much better because, I thought, 'this is how things should be.'

Kim 2005 also experienced this meaningful sense of community in her work environment:

> I taught scuba diving for many years at the same place and then working at the store for seven years and getting to know people really well I stayed there because of the connections with other people. I think Class Afloat guided me a lot to see what's important, and that I like having not just friendships with one or two people, but I really like having friendships with groups of people who know one another and I have continued to seek that out personally.

Embedded in *Kim's 2005* recollection is her desire to seek out meaningful community. Respondents affirmed this "community-seeking-intention" repeatedly, whether or not it had been successful. Seeking a return to the rich community previously experienced through Class Afloat, *Erin 2002* returned to the program as a staff member after her undergraduate experience. The taste she has acquired for meaningful community continues to drive her relationship building. *Erin 2002* notes, "I crave that kind of community – having to rely on others, trusting others, pushing myself," adding, "Since Class Afloat, I explore a new context nearly every year where I get to build relationships and rely on just two to three people."

Similarly, *Thomas 1985* and *Mary 1996* both reflect on the role their Class Afloat experience played inspiring a search for what *Thomas 1985* calls, "deeper, richer friendships." For *Mary 1996*, the experience raised her self-awareness in a way that helped her identify how she might be able to contribute within a community:

> It helped me realize that because of who I was and how I lived life, I would be in a position throughout life that people would turn to me, regardless of what I had going on – and that is something that has played out in a variety of ways – at school and at work. Because of Class Afloat I have been equipped with new people skills. I can empathize, even if I'm in a position where I can't do anything

> else. Because of Class Afloat I realize people need someone and I am in a position to be that person.

The caregiver and empathizer roles have proven consistent in the way *Mary 1996* views her home and work relationships. Similarly, *Thomas 1985* views Class Afloat as "an original building block" for his approach to friendships and community – both in the broad sense of community action and the more narrow scope of family relationships. He reflects, "Even now, over twenty years later, it is one of a handful of experiences that has shaped me and my decision-making." Regarding community action, Thomas 1985 attributes his perspective to Class Afloat, linking his felt obligation to foster positive change. Interestingly, he identifies the divide between internal community change and extending activism across communities (or cultures). The recollection is rooted in the same distinction between his onboard cohort, and the communities encountered at various ports. He reflects:

> I learned a lot about the world and I always want my community to be a better place. You can be an activist at home, but when you're overseas it's better to take the Mother Theresa approach. You're a part of real things and there are real consequences.

Regarding family, Thomas 1985, has arranged his own home community around many of the values he found on board – working smarter rather than harder, and extending what he learned about perspective to his own children in terms of work, travel, and tourism. Through meaningful and intentional vacations – like "avoiding resorts" and taking advantage of "real places" – Thomas 1985 is cultivating community within his family relationships by "prioritizing shared experiences" as the primary gifts he gives to his wife and children – something he recalls experiencing and practicing on Class Afloat.

Two Outliers

While nearly all respondents fell into the above categories, two unique responses merit special highlight. Each story highlights the difficulties inherent in community and friendship building – in terms of conditions and practices – such that participants may experience meaningful community without any sense of how to find it again.

This pattern is certainly true for *Jennifer 1999*, who as noted in chapter 6, recalls making many significant friendships while on Class Afloat. Despite several challenging weeks at the start of her experience, she fell headlong into rich friendships with her roommates. She recalls, "I felt found for the first time." Further, *Jennifer 1999* suggests her own growth in confidence during the experience is due to "strong friendships on board Class Afloat where people listened and offered support."

Within this context – one where the experience of onboard community and friendship appears to be precisely what Class Afloat would aim to achieve – *Jennifer's 1999* post-experience story suggests on-going relational challenges. Despite "community-seeking-intention" fostered by the Class Afloat experience, *Jennifer 1999* shares her struggle to reintegrate and her perception that she is as yet unable to establish post-experience relational support – through friendship or community – that matches what she enjoyed on board.

Her recollection of Class Afloat bears out this contrast. Much of her story regarding the trip itself is shared in the superlative, including phrases like: "the boat was always positive," "I found myself," and "It was the most important year of my life." Regarding her life since, she discusses in detail her fallout with family and school, destructive patterns of substance abuse, broken relationships including former Class Afloat friends and a marriage, and her perception that she is a selfish person. The post-experience trials discussed throughout her story indicate a break from the routines established on board as well as from the friendships that were cultivated through Class Afloat.

Jennifer's 1999 response sits in stark contrast to other stories, as the only story to paint a wholly negative perception of the respondent's current life. Instead of viewing the Class Afloat experience as a foundation for future memories, *Jennifer 1999* reflects on it as an "island of happy memories" in her otherwise stormy life. She summarizes, "That was the good spot. I think about it every day. I found myself, and I haven't been able to say that again since."

Second, recall *Kim 2005*. Although *Kim 2005* was able to foster strong community bonds within her work environment and graduate studies cohort, her current

environment has been less accommodating. The absence of critical conditions like proximity and shared goals have contributed to *Kim's 2005* new sense of isolation and loneliness:

> Right now I'm working a new job in a new industry and I don't have that community. And that's fine for the time being, but I also kind of notice, 'okay there's not much potential in this location for that.' So, what would I want in the future? There's definitely an effect there when you know what community feels like and you aren't experiencing it – you want it again. And maybe people who belong to religious organizations, or something they constantly have as a touch point, would not notice its absence as much because they have a traditional community at home. I know at least in this area of the country young people go to work, they work out, make your food, go out to eat, see people a little, but it's very busy and corporate jobs are really demanding and you're expected to be plugged in all the time, so your social life and connection with others gets put on the back burner. For me, it's something that I'm very aware of and I've decided to do this for a few years to get experience, but I'm not going to continue doing this for the rest of my life. It's ridiculous.

The challenges *Kim 2005* associates with her current situation constrict her perceived ability to recreate the kind of community she craves. Her story reveals her own sense that without the community building conditions provided by Class Afloat, she will be unable to connect with others in her current urban and vocational setting. Additionally, she highlights her sense that shared goals are central to relational success, identifying the potential advantage religious organizations would have for providing similar conditions in an urban or corporate environment.

Interestingly, these two notable responses readdress a central question: Do participants depart from Class Afloat with enough understanding-of and practice-in community to empower them as community or relationship builders going forward? A question of particular importance given the role community and friendship play in cultivating practical wisdom.

Means: Beyond Vision & Intention

As noted previously, the "transformational learning" programs like Class Afloat aspire to involve a measure of dissonance (Kiely, 2005). Mirroring Chapter 8's examination of

personal growth through an acquired vision, intention, and means (Willard, 2002), this chapter explores the social growth acquired through the same process.

Respondent stories suggest that, in life after Class Afloat, the challenge to construct or reconstruct community and friendships is significant as participants reintegrate into their home context. Following Willard (2002), Class Afloat appears to invite participants into a particular vision for life – to establish a meaningful web of relationships including friendships where something like Brogan's (2002) *mirroring* can occur. Further, many participants express an ongoing intention to continue living that way. What remains, is to examine the particular means by which participants attempt to secure – in ongoing fashion – this vision of life they are motivated to maintain.

Perhaps because of this space for processing, or perhaps due to reflection since the experience, respondent stories suggest participants are also equipped with an understanding of the conditions present on board that facilitated the strong social bonds they report. Respondents, with one exception, recall experiencing a kind of community that had previously eluded them; relationships characterized by authenticity and vulnerability, a community that starkly contrasts with their previous school settings, friends that challenge one another to grow. Collectively, the social experience participants report motivated respondents to identify a clear vision of the kind of community they desired – even *Jess 2008*, in reporting a largely negative social experience aboard Class Afloat, indicates that the experience significantly refined her vision for community going forward.

Following their taste of this new vision for what community and friendship building can be like, participants return home from Class Afloat craving more of the same. Respondent stories confirm that the motivation necessary to find and maintain the kind of connectedness they experienced remains strong long after the experience. As noted previously, D'Amato & Krasny (2011) cite many other longitudinal and retrospective studies (including Gass, Garvey, & Sugarman, 2003; Everson, 2000; Liddicoat & Krasny, 2014) which indicate that programs can impact participants for up to 30 years

(Kellert, 1998) and the perceived value of programs can appreciate over time (Hattie et al., 1997).

Aligned with these findings, Class Afloat respondents reflect positively about the community they found and expressed a desire to experience something similar again. Moreover, all respondents confirm explicitly that their vision for the kind of relationships – community and friends – they want to experience in their daily lives was shaped significantly by the kinds of relationships they experienced onboard Class Afloat. Additionally, nearly all respondents shared their desire to experience community and friendship in similar ways going forward in life.

The gap between success and failure respondents have had attempting to reconstruct a rich social context post-experience, then, appears to have less to do with vision and intention, and more to do with application of the appropriate means. Based on the stories, two types of means emerge as important to the kind of relationship building experienced through Class Afloat: conditions and practices.

The community and relationship conditions identified in Chapter 6 as integral to the formation of social bonds during Class Afloat– close proximity, time together, shared goals – provided a framework for future relationship building. Recall the way *Carter 2011*, *Lars 2009*, *Gary 2008*, *Kim 2005*, and *Erin 2002* each follow the Class Afloat model, leveraging relational proximity, time together, and shared goals in their relationship building immediately following their adventure. *Carter 2011*, chose a small university because of its ripe relationship building conditions, and when the sense of community never came, he moved closer to his program alumni community to reestablish new roots. For *Lars 2009* and *Gary 2008*, the context was a university dormitory. *Lars 2009* describes intentional social events that drew a particular group of people together regularly to share meals and spend time together. *Gary 2008* transitioned to university with a few program alumni friends and established the same culture of relationship building through his housing situation, allowing it to grow as new friendships were added – extending the history with those friends and cultivating new shared stories with new and old.

After a disappointing undergraduate experience, *Kim 2005* pursued a graduate degree largely because it offered the kind of community she was craving: a tight cohort with shared interests, studying together. Interestingly, though Kim was able to recreate community when conditions were similar to Class Afloat, she has struggled when they are absent. This is true even though the vision and intention remain. Recall that *Erin 2002*, like *Kim 2005*, continues to seek vocational experiences where contextual conditions mirrored Class Afloat.

At one level, the means relevant to relationship building, for Aristotle (1985) are particular virtues – excellences that are habituated through practice – associated with excellent relationships. The Class Afloat experience provides significant practice grounds for friendship and community building. Furthermore, respondents report engaging a variety of virtues relevant to relationship building that they perceived as having been acquired or cultivated during the Class Afloat experience. Recall, from Chapter 6, that *John 2012*, *Lars 2009*, and *Mary 1996* each discuss the role Class Afloat played in developing their care for others and empathy. *John 2012* goes on to link this learning to his relationships since sailing. He notes, "I learned to be more conscientious of others and understanding the cause and effect of my own actions in this way has helped me serve my friends and family in better ways." *John 2012* also suggests explicitly that his "growth in humility" on Class Afloat has helped him to "think of others more," and "recognize how to treat folks." *Lars 2009* reflects similarly, suggesting that in addition to replicating conditions, the continuing practices of listening and caring well for others has influenced relationships with family and friends for the better – practices he credits Class Afloat for fostering. *Mary 1996* discusses how her on board experience helped her discover new ways to be generous. For her, empathy and generosity continue to define how she relates to others, especially at work (as noted above) – so much so that she perceives responsibility within that community to be "care taker" and "encourager," as she continues to practice generously investing her time in others.

For some, understanding the perceived connection between the relationship building that was experienced and the relationship cultivation since is less straightforward. For instance, *Arthur 1999*, *Rebecca 1995*, and *Thomas 1985* all remember the on board relationship building as positive, discuss the challenge of reintegration, and affirm that they presently maintain healthy social bonds in their current settings, but none reference Class Afloat as the seedbed for particular virtues that enrich these social bonds. Additionally, *Jennifer 1999* affirms the vision for relationship building she experienced on Class Afloat, and she repeatedly expresses her desire to engage that kind of community again, but explicitly describes her context and character as absent the kinds of conditions and virtues requisite for constructing those social bonds in her present life.

Cultivating Social Virtues & Practical Wisdom

At another level, Aristotle (1985) argues that the means necessary for a flourishing life include not just the moral virtues themselves – either practiced or as dispositions – but also the way to mediate their application in the right way, at the right time, as particular situations demand. This mediation in particular situations, which demands the application of various virtues (including social virtues like empathy, loyalty, care, and friendship itself), is the practice of practical wisdom. As Kristjansson (2014) explains, full virtue suggests more than habit. It is choosing "the right actions and emotions" from a stable disposition, "after having submitted them to the arbitration of our *phronesis*" (p. 340).

By and large, respondent stories explicitly praise Class Afloat for its positive impact regarding relationship development – including instilling a desire for the kind of community and friendship building experienced on board; a kind of relationship building described in ways that link it to Aristotelian notions of connectedness, friendship, and being known (Brogan, 2002), which by Aristotle's (1985) account, supports the development of practical wisdom. Additionally, respondent stories display a capacity in many participants to recreate similar community conditions post-experience; some even

explicitly linking their ability to identify and choose conditions requisite for successful community building – proximity, time, and shared goals – and attributing this ability to learning acquired through their Class Afloat experience. Stories also explicitly name particular moral dispositions important to relationships (including care for the other, cooperation, empathy, humility, hospitality, and trust) as practices cultivated on board Class Afloat. All of these developments constitute a foundation ready for the practice of practical wisdom.

Absent these foundational developments, as noted elsewhere, there is little for practical wisdom to mediate. Given the rich soil for mediation represented by participants' understanding of requisite conditions and application of moral virtues, there is reason to expect evidence of practical wisdom within stories, particularly in an environment ripe with strong social relationships cultivated during Class Afloat and since. It is through deliberation and reflection that this mediating occurs (Kristjansson, 2014). In particular, respondent discussions of relationship building since the Class Afloat experience suggest growth in capacities something like Tiberius' (2008) perspective, moderate self-awareness, and realistic optimism; growth in some of the reflective constituents of practical wisdom.

As an example, consider *Gary's 2008* story through this lens. He discusses at length the shifts in perspective he experienced that were drawn out through his social relationships post Class Afloat. These shifts in perspective were also a part of his on board experience – learning to appreciate the value of the things he values (Tiberius, 2008). During Class Afloat, *Gary 2008* experienced a shift in his personal values: for example, becoming more aware of complexities associated with global poverty, adopting many values associated with ship life that translated into routines which differed from life at home. Consequently, his return home included a "phase" of selfishness associated with feelings of pride and guilt. As noted previously, *Gary 2008* transitions out of this phase as he settles into relationship with his family. He notes personal growth in self-awareness that occurs largely through relational confrontation with others in his home context – his sister and parents in particular.

Additionally, *Gary 2008* remained connected to his Class Afloat friends through university. Through his living arrangement, *Gary 2008* intentionally secured relational proximity, time, and to some degree shared goals for himself within this new context. He reports intentionally placing himself in a community where he was already known; increasing the likelihood he would experience rich friendships. His being known within this chosen context, in turn, fostered ongoing growth in self-awareness and optimism. He discusses continuing to dialogically process the Class Afloat experience with friends – not by simply by remembering the experience, as appears to be the case for *Kim 2005* and *Mary 1996*, but reflectively considering how it continues to impact the kind of person he is becoming. His discussion of this "wrestling," recalls Tiberius' (2008) moderate self-awareness, such that *Gary 2008* "constructs a self-concept that is responsive to all the aspects of the self: judgments, aspirations, emotions, and wants…and decides what is important to [him]" (p. 132). In his reflecting, *Gary 2008* appears to be practicing *phronesis* by "[choosing] to observe good actions, both his own and wherever they occur" (Brogan, 2002).

Furthermore, *Gary 2008* reveals a subtle hope even in his discussion of personal guilt and frustration with Western approaches to global social justice. This hope looks something like Tiberius' (2008) realistic optimism in that *Gary 2008* does not deny the realist view. Instead, encouraged in his own relational context and empowered by the courage and confidence grounded predominantly in his continuing Class Afloat friendships, he appears to "[judge] that human nature does not make people incapable of improvement" (p. 153). Despite his explicit admission that he is "more of a realist now," and in spite of his own disappointment with his current trajectory, noting that, "life hasn't taken on momentum yet," there exists in his story an undercurrent suggesting a refined clarity of personal values and a sustained hope for achieving great things. Regarding both, Gary 2008 credits his Class Afloat experience – presumably because they appear derivative of the moral virtues and relational bonds he perceives as having been cultivated during his Class Afloat experience.

Though in varying fashion, these reflective virtue themes surface across respondent stories as participants foster old friendships and engage new ones.

Concluding Thoughts

Beyond Tiberius' (2008) list of constituents for practical wisdom, as noted above, respondent stories reveal on-going practice of wise decision-making in relationships – navigating challenges and appropriating moral virtues in their particular circumstances post Class Afloat.

Establishing successful relational bonds after their sailing experience, despite being a challenging task for participants, represents perhaps the most foundational virtuous practice connected to growth in practical wisdom. As Kristjansson (2014) notes, "The most salient avenue for continuing life-long moral education is through dialectical interactions with friends" (p. 345). Numerous studies across disciplines support this line of thinking – the notion that healthy friendships have a positive impact on prudent decision-making, and the ability to strengthen one's own perspective, self-awareness, and capacity for hope or optimism – for example, education and vocational training (Gibbs & McRoy, 2006; Espersen-Peters & Beaverford, 2013), work environments (Küpers & Statler, 2008), and support groups and addict sponsorships (Young, 2012; DiGangi et al., 2014).

It seems a participant's success in overcoming the social challenges of reintegration depend largely on her ability to maintain or form a new set of social connections that can support the reflection necessary to process changes in value commitments and personal identity. Just as the "disorienting dilemma" of stepping on board Class Afloat generates a transformative learning opportunity (Mezirow, 2000), so the transformation continues as the participant returns to her old environment transformed.

Chapter 10: Concluding Thoughts & Questions for Future Study

Introduction

As noted in the methods chapter, this study attempts to better understand the significance of residential programs in participant's lives and the role these programs might play as catalysts for practical wisdom. It does so sitting at the intersection of experiential learning and Aristotelian virtue theory, and studying an exemplar case from sail training. This chapter retraces both the theoretical framework used and answers offered to the study's three central research questions, before locating the specific contributions of this work across those fields and raising recommendations for future study at this intersection of scholarship.

Regarding the Theoretical Frameworks

Broadly, this study repeatedly references the theoretical/philosophical space shared by experiential educators (especially those with outdoor adventure or expeditionary leanings) and neo-Aristotelian virtue theorists – particularly, their shared interest in personal and social development characterized as something like Aristotelian practical wisdom. Chapter 1 demarcates what theorists and practitioners seem to mean by experiential education, highlighting the overriding emphasis on personal and social education. Educating experientially, it seems, requires rethinking the roles of learner, educator, and curriculum. Process and trust take on more central roles as the educator shifts to a co-learner position, and the learner takes an apprentice-like posture. Learning experiences balance the prioritization of learning goals and a learner's prior knowledge – claiming that connecting the two is central to understanding. Furthermore, this emphasis on personal and social education is likened to Aristotelian notions of practical wisdom, depicting the skill as good judgment or practical reasoning.

Neo-Aristotelian virtue theory places practical wisdom at the center of living well – a practical, intellectual virtue which mediates moral (and possibly prudential) virtues to empower wise, situated decision-making. On this view, the very practice of virtues –

doing the right thing, in the right way, at the right time – requires practical wisdom (Aristotle, 1985).

Connecting these two frameworks for the sake of understanding perceived personal and social development requires fancy philosophical footwork. Following Tiberius' (2008) first-person approach, this study suggests that first-person perspectives are more than just *the best we can do* – they are appropriate for the questions being asked. Her work descriptively traces reflective virtues – constituents of practical wisdom – that support first-person identification of value commitments such that individuals can pursue that life which they deem worth living (Tiberius, 2008). Absent practical wisdom (and its constituent virtues) individuals will struggle to identify the kind of life they perceive as worth living, and will lack the decision-making power to engage that life (Tiberius, 2008). Such an approach, as noted in Chapter 3, represents a reworking of the methodology suggested by Significant Life Experiences literature, drawing inspiration from the successes and critiques of that method.

Applying this framework to the chosen case, the study seeks to understand participant perceptions regarding a) growth in moral and prudential virtues (including those which act as constituents of practical wisdom), b) growth in good decision-making, and c) growth in the ability to identify a life worth living and pursue it.

In this way, the framework has been both appropriate and useful. Locating – in stories – evidence of perceived growth in a variety of virtues offers a foundation for the claim that Class Afloat alumni perceive themselves as experiencing growth in practical wisdom. Furthermore, the study has sought ways to link perceived growth (outcomes) to their perceived catalysts (context and program) to understand what parts of the experience are perceived as most meaningful – particularly as participants reflect at varying chronological distances from the experience. The framework offers theorists and practitioners a sophisticated linguistic construct for evaluating and designing experiential pedagogy.

Regarding the Central Research Questions

This study identifies three central research questions:

1. In retrospect, how do participants view their experience in terms of contribution to personal and social development?

2. In retrospect, in what themes (if any) emerge from respondent stories that provide insight regarding how practical wisdom may have been cultivated through the experience?

3. In retrospect, what ways (if any) do participants perceive the experience to have shifted their personal identity, value commitments, or the practice of virtues – moral and prudential (insofar as these are perceived as contributors to increased practical wisdom)?

This section retraces proposed answers to these questions with a view toward more tightly linking previous chapters.

Research Question 1

In retrospect, how do participants view their experience in terms of contribution to personal and social development?

The first research question asks how participants perceive their Class Afloat experience as having an impact on their personal and social development. Stories across all chapters address this question in the particulars as participants locate their perceived growth within the particular context of their experience. Particular virtues are described – responsibility, discipline, courage, friendship, empathy, and on – and respondents link growth in these areas to the particulars of onboard life – sailing maneuvers, night watch, galley duty, port visits, and on.

At the center of this personal and social education is the notion of transformational learning. As noted throughout (but particularly in Chapter 7) respondents repeatedly reference the significant, paradigmatic feel of their experience. As noted in Chapters 5

and 7, this transformation is instigated by two experiences of disorienting dissonance: stepping into life on the boat, and returning to life at home. Both are disruptive. Both generate new and somewhat unexpected challenges.

In weighing the overall impact of Class Afloat on their lives, there is little difference between recent program alumni and those who sailed in the first few years. In fact, when weighing the significance of the experience on the questionnaire, respondents who sailed between 1985 and 1998 report a slight appreciation in perceived significance (up 0.05 on a 6-point Likert scale), compared to small decreases for those sailing 1999-2006 (down 0.50) and 2007-2012 (down 0.21). More significant is the shift in language used to describe the significance of the experience. Story accounts from early program participants (1985-1998) offer richer accounts of the impact – frequently linking the experience to other rich learning experiences they have encountered in life – suggesting the experience takes time to process. Several recent program alumni (2009-2012) note they are still processing the voyage.

Similarly, recognizing the overall impact the Class Afloat experience has on personal identity seems to take time. More recent program alumni approach the same area of growth in more limited fashion with phrases like "Class Afloat changed who I was striving to become," "I learned more is possible," or "it gave me a new way to think about my future." In each case, the impact of growth is narrowed to a particular element of growth, be it clarifying vision or reflecting on growth in self-determination. In contrast, the summative phrase "I found myself" appears in multiple stories for alumni sailing prior to 1999. This phrase suggests deep connection to the experience and the collective personal development being attributed to the Class Afloat learning.

Research Question 2

In retrospect, what themes (if any) emerge from respondent stories that provide insight regarding how practical wisdom may have been cultivated through the experience?

The second research question focuses more narrowly on themes that emerge from respondent stories – specifically those perceived to have been cultivated during the Class Afloat experience – and engages these themes to explore how the experience itself might cultivate practical wisdom in participants. Chapters 4 through 6 focus their attention here.

Chapter 4 discusses the unique structure of on-board life during Class Afloat, suggesting that such a structure appears to engage participants in work routines, individual reflection, and group processing in ways that encourage the development of specific habits and routines. At a minimum, these routines seem to allow participants to practice building habits – a foundational skill for virtue cultivation, which is in turn critical to Aristotle's (1985) notion of a flourishing life. It is clear, on Aristotle's (1985) view, that growth in practical wisdom requires the kinds of practices which constitute the exercise of practical wisdom – like Tiberius' (2008) *attentional flexibility*, perspective, self-awareness, and optimism – as well as a measure of moral virtues, both of which are cultivated through habitual practice. On board routines, however, appear to do more than invite participants to build habits. The routines establish a variety of personal and social programmatic challenges that foster growth in specific personal and social virtues: responsibility, self-discipline, and *attentional flexibility*. The onboard environment appears to serve as a catalyst for personal and social growth by providing a seedbed of routine and practice as well as the appropriate environment – the metaphoric sun, water, and soil – needed for further virtue cultivation.

Chapter 5 examines the role respondents assign to Class Afloat's contextual and programmatic challenges – including onboard adventures and ports visits – in shaping their personal identities, and cultivating associated virtues. Respondents suggest the challenges themselves and the accompanying time for individual reflection and group processing provide frequent opportunities to practice, and subsequently cultivate, specific virtues: courage, self-awareness, perspective, and humility. As they reflect on their Class Afloat voyage, respondents suggest these contextual and programmatic experiences, practices, and the associated *meaning making* that occurs through

individual reflection and group processing drew them into a bigger vision for living – one which appears to include identity and purpose clarification. Introduction to and practice of these virtues supports the practice of practical wisdom. As participants practice bravery, for instance, they better understand how bravery might apply to varying situations. Understanding how to apply bravery in particular situations exemplifies the mediating role practical wisdom plays in decision-making. Thus, personal growth in these moral virtues directly impacts a participant's ability to make wise decisions. As Aristotle (1985) notes, practical wisdom without moral virtue is simply cleverness, rather than cleverness aimed at what is good (p. 97-98). Said otherwise, moral and prudential virtues are necessary for the execution of practically wise decision-making.

Chapter 6 examines how respondents understand the role of relationship building and community formation during their Class Afloat experience. Respondents acknowledge intense friendships secured through shared experience and goals. They recall engaging friendship at multiple levels – utility, pleasure, and virtue – with different members of their Class Afloat cohort. For friendships that extend beyond utility, respondent stories reference repeated practice building friendship with increasing depth – described as friendships expressing empathy, trust, and vulnerability – in ways that further cultivate virtues like self-awareness, optimism, and courage. Again, social growth in these virtues impacts a participant's ability to deliberate well with others, make wise decisions, and mobilize others toward wise action.

The context of ship life appears to accelerate the practice of these virtues in both personal and social dimensions, supporting the Aristotelian description of virtue cultivation and the development of practical wisdom discussed in Chapter 2.

Research Question 3

In retrospect, in what ways (if any) do participants perceive the experience to have shifted their personal identity, value commitments, or the practice of virtues – moral and

prudential (insofar as these are perceived as contributors to increased practical wisdom)?

Finally, the third research question seeks to understand participant perceived growth in personal and social growth since the Class Afloat experience. It does so by focusing narrowly on participant perceived shift and clarification regarding personal identity, value commitments, and the practice of virtue – moral and prudential – insofar as they support practical wisdom, since returning from the Class Afloat experience. Chapters 7 through 9 focus their attention here.

As respondents step away from life on board, they are also stepping away from the routine of ship-life and the associated rhythms of repeated practice established by that schedule. Given Aristotle's (1985) assertion that flourishing is measured across a lifetime – and likewise practical wisdom acquired across that span – it is not sufficient to draw conclusions regarding *only* how participants understood their experience, or report *only* what learning occurred during the sail journey. The retrospective nature of this study is designed for this very purpose - to understand how respondents perceive their growth in these areas since leaving Class Afloat.

Furthermore, exploring respondent perceptions of their own lives since Class Afloat may shed light on further questions: Was the experience long enough to establish habitual patterns that will continue in new contexts? Will the personal and social gains made on board transfer to life off the vessel? How do respondents themselves understand their perceived transformation in terms of personal identity, value commitments, and ongoing practice of virtue?

Chapter 7 examines the perceived difficulties facing respondents as they step away from life aboard Class Afloat as identified through their stories. It examines how participants perceive their Class Afloat experience on the whole – taking a broad view of the reintegration process, the shift in perspective respondents report feeling, and the perceived value of relationships. It becomes clear that reintegration creates dissonance in participants. In turn, reintegration triggers additional personal and social growth –

including self-determination. Additionally, the chapter introduces Willard's (2002) model of transformation – Aristotelian in nature – which supports examining transformation by evaluating the vision, intention, and means applied to engaging the new way of being.

Chapter 8 examines specific respondent perceptions of post-voyage personal development, including values clarification, global perspective, and love of travel. Participants seem to return to their home context with shifting value commitments and new reflective practices. These themes are explored, and linked to the conditions and practices respondents identify in their post-voyage life, connecting these practices to ongoing personal growth insofar as it is perceived to connect with the Class Afloat experience. Stories suggest that these ongoing practices support continued growth in *attentional* flexibility, courage, self-awareness, humility, responsibility, and discipline – all of which strengthen participants' ability to mediate right behavior and make practically wise decisions in changing environments.

Chapter 9 examines specific respondent perceptions of post-voyage challenges to social development. Respondent stories reveal that participants exhibit a variety of responses to the sudden loss of community and disconnection from friendships that occurs when the Class Afloat program ends. Chapter 9 examines the ways in which participants perceive themselves as coping with these changes and seeks to understand how equipped respondents perceive themselves to be in terms of their ability to replicate the kinds of relationships and/or communities that would be conducive – in an Aristotelian sense – to continued growth in practical wisdom. While some hold on to their Class Afloat community, others have found ways to replicate the conditions of Class Afloat in other settings. In each approach, program alumni exhibit ongoing growth in a variety of social virtues including friendship, humility, empathy, trust, cooperation, humility, hospitality, and care for the other. As noted previously, growth in these areas strengthens participants' ability to mediate right behavior and make practically wise decisions in changing environments.

Contribution & Recommendations

In this study, I have tried to take clear steps toward systematic analysis of questionnaire and story data with both inductive and *a priori* categories. My hope is that such an approach has not only increased the breadth of data – allowing some themes to emerge naturally, before soliciting responses narrowed by the chosen theoretical lens – but also the depth of data, engaging respondents in story inquiry requiring reflection across a lifetime rather than just requesting reflection on a particular event.

In both the questionnaire and interviews, inductive collection preceded introduction of *a priori* themes. Additionally, a large chronological range of respondents – through the questionnaire and interviews – appears to provide broad representation of multiple life stages, securing a unique retrospective opportunity this study aims to achieve.

In part, this methodological approach extends into new territory. While drawing inspiration from research methods in transformational learning literature and significant life experience literature, it does not mirror either. Furthermore, the notion of long-term reflection is greatly expanded by this study. With few exceptions (Cleland, 2011; Takano, 2010) similar studies investigate participant perceptions during and immediately following the experience, so much so that six months of retrospect is considered long term (Schjif, 2014).

Interviews have been scrutinized, analysed, and interpreted through a neo-Aristotelian lens. As Phillips (1993) notes, "A view that is objective is one that has been opened up to scrutiny, to vigorous examination, to challenge" (p. 66). To that end, findings have been presented, discussed, and subsequently honed to explore themes as they emerge from stories and make relevant connections to the chosen theoretical frame. This section examines the contribution of this study to relevant literature and makes recommendations for future research at this intersection of scholarship.

First, this study supports ongoing work in Sail Training and Experiential Learning. Approached retrospectively, this study offers experiential learning researchers story rich, qualitative data analyzed to understand how personal and social learning is perceived to occur within experiential learning environments. This connects to current trends in experiential education literature which emphasize the need for personal and social development understood as akin Aristotelian practical wisdom (Allison et al, 2011; Allison & Wurdinger, 2005; Arnold, 1999, 2001; Bessant, 2009; Brinkmann, 2007; Carr, 2006; Kristjánsson, 2007; Seaman and Coppens, 2006; Stonehouse et al, 2009).

In the narrowest sense, analysis from this study offers insight to theorists and practitioners regarding how Class Afloat program alumni understand the impact of their voyage on their personal and social development. This study explores the ways in which this experience is perceived as significant to personal and social growth (outcomes), and how the participant perceives that growth as having occurred (processes).

Further, this study positions Class Afloat as an exemplar residential learning program. That is, if claims are being made regarding perceived outcomes and associated processes, then theorists can expect to see evidence of those claims in *at least* this program. Any generalizability from a proposed exemplar must first recognize that the study seeks to understand "what could be" rather than what generally is case (Schofield, 1993, p. 109). Thus, this study presents a set of findings regarding the perceived outcomes sail training operators might come to expect – insofar as their program engages similar participants in a similar program (at least a semester long, on a tall ship, with particular program elements).

Second, this study applies the theoretical pursuits of some neo-Aristotelian virtue theorists (including Tiberius, 2008) by collecting self-reports regarding personal and social growth and interpreting them through a neo-Aristotelian lens with an emphasis on practical wisdom, its constituent virtues, and the relevant moral virtues practical wisdom was called upon to mediate. In this way, the study offers an example of intersection between neo-Aristotelian virtue thinking and experiential education. If deemed valuable,

this intersection provides experiential educators with an additional (or refined) theoretical framework available for future research regarding personal and social development. Appropriation of these linguistic and theoretical constructs, given their connectedness to applicable research with real participants, may also offer educators new paths toward generating meaningful evaluations and systems of accountability for program development and assessment (Bobilya et al, 2010).

The theoretical model used in this study presents a useful way forward for future studies interested in personal and social learning – applying this approach across contexts. Does the neo-Aristotelian framework help researchers make sense of personal and social growth in alternative contexts? While extending into similar fields – outdoor education and expeditionary learning – could largely mirror the outcomes represented in this study, it would be equally interesting to explore the kinds of programmatic contexts which link to primary outcomes associated with personal learning (like self-awareness, courage, and self-determination) and social learning (empathy, care for the other, humility, friendship building). Opportunities to extend the framework – to other study abroad programs, a residential university experience, or even a secondary classroom – would test the usefulness of methods presented in this study as measures of personal and social development in ways that mirror Aristotelian practical wisdom.

Third, this study links perceived outcomes regarding personal and social learning to particular programmatic contexts, processes, and elements. Understanding the perceived connection between outcomes and processes offers Class Afloat specific insights that may inform design strategies, pedagogical practices, and experience development in other sail training and experience driven programs aimed at personal and social development. Furthermore, this study provides sail training (and potentially outdoor adventure education operators) with insight into the perceived value of participation in both the short and long term. This information is particularly valuable as operators reach out to potential clients with claims regarding the outcomes these kinds of programs may secure.

Finally, the study blends existing methods from several frameworks in a fresh way, showing promise for future studies along these lines. The success of the methodological approach used in this study to elucidate the perceived impact of experiential learning environments across almost three decades of retrospect underscores the gap this study identifies. The retrospective range offered in this study provided useful data to analyze differences in response across time. Of equal importance, the study offers future researchers a model for capturing similar perceptions retrospectively to elucidate perceived impact of similar experiences.

Concluding Thoughts

Investigating program alumni perceptions in this way drew out a variety of rich participant reflections both on the experience, and on life since. As a novice researcher, it was interesting to note the appreciative feedback given by respondents as each interview drew to a close. With only a few exceptions, respondents extended the interview with a comment or two about how much they enjoyed the experience – reflecting on their Class Afloat experience prior to the interview, and then discussing it dialogically with me. Additionally, I was surprised by the similarity between responses. As noted, program alumni who participated in the earlier years reflected a richer expression of the experience's significance to them, but the areas of growth, the perceived causal connections, and the story vividness were all largely the same.

As a fan of Aristotelian virtue theory, I have enjoyed viewing respondent stories through that lens. The philosopher in me sees it as a rare opportunity to test Aristotle's description of moral development – trying to understand participant personal and social development in a way that makes sense given his theoretical landscape. Now at the end of this first study, I find myself encouraged by the fit his picture has with the development of Class Afloat participants.

The life-stories that program alumni share here reflect strong perceptions of values clarification, identification of lives worth living, and the pursuit of practices that help

alumni take hold of the desired lives. Tiberius (2008) prioritizes first-person perceptions as viable a measure for reflection, engage Aristotle's virtue theory as a framework for making sense of those perceptions and as a viable process for cultivating growth in virtues. Viewed through this lens, the personal and social development of Class Afloat participants is drawn into focus, revealing an increasing prowess in program alumni for healthy habit formation, self-determination, wise decision-making, and reliance on social networks. On the whole, these life-stories reveal growth in alumni capacity to do the right thing, in the right way, at the right time – a capacity to mediate that Aristotle identified as practical wisdom.

Appendices

Appendix A: Pilot Survey Notes, 12.16.13

PILOT Survey
The pilot survey was designed to capitalize on the theoretical lens (practical wisdom and reflective virtues) in a similar semester abroad, ocean program: Semester at Sea. The Semester at Sea program, while being a quite different experience from Class Afloat, has enough overlap that it serves as a meaningful incubator for the survey questionnaire.

Survey Adjustment – Friendship
The pilot survey was designed to capitalize on the theoretical lens (practical wisdom and reflective virtues) in a similar semester abroad, ocean program: Semester at Sea. One crucial inside the pilot offered was recognizing the significance friendships played in the experience. Previously I had clumped friendship alongside multiple social interactions as the broader "Community Life" category. Multiple pilot participants identified this as an oversight and listed friendship separately or suggested separating it from the broader category.
This was a significant insight, as Aristotle spends significant time exploring friendship in his treatise on *eudaimonia*. I hadn't previously imagined there would be tangible connections between the two. Now, however, I have separated friendship in the Class Afloat survey and added several questions regarding the frequency of contact with semester friends in both personal and more social media oriented ways. I anticipate the results will lend shape to interview questions regarding the role of friendship related to the development of practical wisdom. Additionally, it has led me back to Aristotle's own writing on friendship. Reviewing his thoughts on friendship will lend renewed thickness to the theoretical lens.

Appendix B: Research Questionnaire

Section 1: Acknowledgement of Consent

About the Study, Informed Consent, & Confidentiality
These interviews are part of a larger study investigating the influence residential semester programs are perceived to have on participants.

This research aims at a richer understanding of personal and social development in experiential approaches to education by looking at the reflective perceptions of participants in a particular, experiential, residential, semester program (Class Afloat). The study investigates the reflections of participants across 29 years (1985-2012). I seek to understand how the experience is perceived to influence personal and social development in participants. This research is part of my PhD thesis as a student at the Moray House of Education, University of Edinburgh. The study is independent of any political organization or policymaking unit and is being funded by the researcher. Participation in an interview is entirely voluntary and contributors are free to withdraw at any time.

The research project follows the revised ethical guidelines of the British Educational Research Association (BERA) which stipulates researchers respect their participants through a range of responsibilities including:

- *A voluntary informed consent, to be confirmed by interviewee and interviewer verbally at the start of the interview.*
- The option for participants to keep their contributions anonymous.
- The option for participants not to be directly quoted.
- The option for participants not to have any material or information attributed to them.
- Information taken from the interview to be treated in the strictest of confidence.
- Information to be securely stored in a digital format, using password protected files.

The research will contribute to the understanding of perceived value gained through experiential, residential semester programming over time. Understanding how the experience is perceived at varying lengths of time from the experience will shed light on the long term perceived effects of such programs, and will inform program development aimed at increased personal and social development in participants. The research will form part of PhD study resulting in a written thesis and peer reviewed journal articles.

If you have any questions before, during or after the interview please feel free to email me - Aaron Marshall at A.R.Marshall-2@sms.ed.ac.uk

1. I give my voluntary consent to participate in this questionnaire.
   Yes
   No

Section 2: Personal Information

2. Gender
   Female
   Male
3. What year did your (first) Class Afloat semester experience begin? (As a participant)
   2012…
   1985
4. How long did you attend the Class Afloat program?
   Less than a semester
   A single semester
   A full year (2 semesters)
   More than two semesters
5. It has been ___ years since my most recent Class Afloat experience.
   1 or less…
   28 or more

Section 3: Initial Reflections on your Class Afloat experience

6. List 3 words that reflect your overall impression of your Class Afloat experience.
   6.a. Why did you identify those three words as most fitting?
7. How frequently do you think about your Class Afloat experience?
   Daily
   Weekly
   Monthly
   Quarterly
   Annually
   Other (please specify)
8. What components of your Class Afloat experience do you perceive as most memorable?
   8.a. Why did you identify those components as most memorable?
9. When reflecting on the Class Afloat experience, would you say that participation caused a change in you?
   9.a. If yes, briefly describe how you think the Class Afloat experience changed you. If no, briefly state why you think it did not change you.

Section 4: Directed Reflections on the Class Afloat program

10. Which of the following best describes your current, overall perception of your Class Afloat experience?
    Miserable and not meaningful
    Miserable and meaningful

Neutral and not meaningful
Neutral and meaningful
Enjoyable and not meaningful
Enjoyable and meaningful

11. In the following table, please consider how significant you consider each programmatic element to have been in your Class Afloat experience. "Then" on the far right, please mark the 3 categories that you consider most significant to your experience.
    - 11.a. Ship Duties (Maintenance, Galley, Watch) -- Please Scale each element from very insignificant (1) to very significant (6). If the element was not a part of your experience, please mark not applicable (NA)
    - 11.b. Cultivation of Friendships -- Please Scale each element from very insignificant (1) to very significant (6). If the element was not a part of your experience, please mark not applicable (NA)
    - 11.c. Community Life (Social Time, Interpersonal Interactions, Shared Experiences) -- Please Scale each element from very insignificant (1) to very significant (6). If the element was not a part of your experience, please mark not applicable (NA)
    - 11.d. Course Work (Teachers, Classes, Debates) -- Please Scale each element from very insignificant (1) to very significant (6). If the element was not a part of your experience, please mark not applicable (NA)
    - 11.e. Discomfort (Lack of Sleep, Seasickness, Homesickness) -- Please Scale each element from very insignificant (1) to very significant (6). If the element was not a part of your experience, please mark not applicable (NA)
    - 11.f. Port Visits (Travel, Adventure, Tours) -- Please Scale each element from very insignificant (1) to very significant (6). If the element was not a part of your experience, please mark not applicable (NA)
    - 11.g. Home Stays -- Please Scale each element from very insignificant (1) to very significant (6). If the element was not a part of your experience, please mark not applicable (NA)
    - 11.h. Service Learning (Community Development Projects) -- Please Scale each element from very insignificant (1) to very significant (6). If the element was not a part of your experience, please mark not applicable (NA)
    - 11.i. Structure (Rules, Responsibility) -- Please Scale each element from very insignificant (1) to very significant (6). If the element was not a part of your experience, please mark not applicable (NA)
    - 11.j. Exposure to Poverty -- Please Scale each element from very insignificant (1) to very significant (6). If the element was not a part of your experience, please mark not applicable (NA)
12. Are there any programmatic elements you found to be significant to your experience that were not listed above?
13. Please list the most significant programmatic element in your experience and state why you perceive it as so significant.

Section 5: Continuing Connection to Class Afloat program

14. How many of your crewmates do you stay in contact with?
    - 0
    - 1-2
    - 3-5
    - 6-10
    - 11-15
    - more than 15

    14.a. How frequently do you have *impersonal* contact with those crewmates (email, messaging, social media)?
    - Daily
    - Weekly
    - Monthly
    - Quarterly
    - Annually
    - Once every 2-3 years
    - Once every 4-5 years
    - Less than once every 5 years

    14.b. How frequently do you have *personal* contact with those crewmates (email, messaging, social media)?
    - Daily
    - Weekly
    - Monthly
    - Quarterly
    - Annually
    - Once every 2-3 years
    - Once every 4-5 years
    - Less than once every 5 years

15. Would you recommend the Class Afloat Program to others?
    - Yes
    - No

Section 6: Program Reflections

16. Compare your current reflections on your Class Afloat experience to how you remember feeling just after you completed the program.

    16.a. Feeling of connectedness to crew-mates, THEN -- Please scale each response from very insignificant (1) to very significant (6). If you have no memories that fit a particular category, answer not applicable (NA)

    16.b. Feeling of connectedness to crew-mates, NOW -- Please scale each response from very insignificant (1) to very significant (6). If you have no memories that fit a particular category, answer not applicable (NA)

16.c. Overall significance of Class Afloat experience, THEN -- Please scale each response from very insignificant (1) to very significant (6). If you have no memories that fit a particular category, answer not applicable (NA)

16.d. Overall significance of Class Afloat experience, NOW -- Please scale each response from very insignificant (1) to very significant (6). If you have no memories that fit a particular category, answer not applicable (NA)

16.e. Significance of positive memories, THEN -- Please scale each response from very insignificant (1) to very significant (6). If you have no memories that fit a particular category, answer not applicable (NA)

16.f. Significance of positive memories, NOW -- Please scale each response from very insignificant (1) to very significant (6). If you have no memories that fit a particular category, answer not applicable (NA)

16.g. Significance of challenging memories, THEN -- Please scale each response from very insignificant (1) to very significant (6). If you have no memories that fit a particular category, answer not applicable (NA)

16.h. Significance of challenging memories, NOW -- Please scale each response from very insignificant (1) to very significant (6). If you have no memories that fit a particular category, answer not applicable (NA)

16.i. Significance of negative memories, THEN -- Please scale each response from very insignificant (1) to very significant (6). If you have no memories that fit a particular category, answer not applicable (NA)

16.j. Significance of negative memories, NOW -- Please scale each response from very insignificant (1) to very significant (6). If you have no memories that fit a particular category, answer not applicable (NA)

16.k. Sense that meaningful lessons were learned, THEN -- Please scale each response from very insignificant (1) to very significant (6). If you have no memories that fit a particular category, answer not applicable (NA)

16.l. Sense that meaningful lessons were learned, NOW -- Please scale each response from very insignificant (1) to very significant (6). If you have no memories that fit a particular category, answer not applicable (NA)

17. Please comment on how you think about your Class Afloat experience. Have your perceptions changed over time? If they have changed, in what ways?

18. Please comment on "why" you think your perceptions have changed or remained the same.

Section 7: Personal Reflections

19. Sense of Confidence in my own abilities

19.a. Prior to Class Afloat -- Please scale from low (1) to high (6). If no change, select not applicable (NA)

19.b. Today -- Please scale from low (1) to high (6). If no change, select not applicable (NA)

19.c. How important was the Class Afloat experience to this change? -- Please scale from low (1) to high (6). If no change, select not applicable (NA)

20. My ability to adapt to shifting circumstances.
    - 20.a. Prior to Class Afloat -- Please scale from low (1) to high (6). If no change, select not applicable (NA)
    - 20.b. Today -- Please scale from low (1) to high (6). If no change, select not applicable (NA)
    - 20.c. How important was the Class Afloat experience to this change? -- Please scale from low (1) to high (6). If no change, select not applicable (NA)
21. My ability to face my life's circumstances with healthy perspective.
    - 21.a. Prior to Class Afloat -- Please scale from low (1) to high (6). If no change, select not applicable (NA)
    - 21.b. Today -- Please scale from low (1) to high (6). If no change, select not applicable (NA)
    - 21.c. How important was the Class Afloat experience to this change? -- Please scale from low (1) to high (6). If no change, select not applicable (NA)
22. My ability to accurately assess my own strengths.
    - 22.a. Prior to Class Afloat -- Please scale from low (1) to high (6). If no change, select not applicable (NA)
    - 22.b. Today -- Please scale from low (1) to high (6). If no change, select not applicable (NA)
    - 22.c. How important was the Class Afloat experience to this change? -- Please scale from low (1) to high (6). If no change, select not applicable (NA)
23. My ability to accurately assess my own weaknesses.
    - 23.a. Prior to Class Afloat -- Please scale from low (1) to high (6). If no change, select not applicable (NA)
    - 23.b. Today -- Please scale from low (1) to high (6). If no change, select not applicable (NA)
    - 23.c. How important was the Class Afloat experience to this change? -- Please scale from low (1) to high (6). If no change, select not applicable (NA)
24. My sense of hope in life.
    - 24.a. Prior to Class Afloat -- Please scale from low (1) to high (6). If no change, select not applicable (NA)
    - 24.b. Today -- Please scale from low (1) to high (6). If no change, select not applicable (NA)
    - 24.c. How important was the Class Afloat experience to this change? -- Please scale from low (1) to high (6). If no change, select not applicable (NA)
25. My sense of optimism in life.
    - 25.a. Prior to Class Afloat -- Please scale from low (1) to high (6). If no change, select not applicable (NA)
    - 25.b. Today -- Please scale from low (1) to high (6). If no change, select not applicable (NA)
    - 25.c. How important was the Class Afloat experience to this change? -- Please scale from low (1) to high (6). If no change, select not applicable (NA)
26. My sense of realism in life.

26.a. Prior to Class Afloat -- Please scale from low (1) to high (6). If no change, select not applicable (NA)
26.b. Today -- Please scale from low (1) to high (6). If no change, select not applicable (NA)
26.c. How important was the Class Afloat experience to this change? -- Please scale from low (1) to high (6). If no change, select not applicable (NA)

27. My sense of pessimism in life.
27.a. Prior to Class Afloat -- Please scale from low (1) to high (6). If no change, select not applicable (NA)
27.b. Today -- Please scale from low (1) to high (6). If no change, select not applicable (NA)
27.c. How important was the Class Afloat experience to this change? -- Please scale from low (1) to high (6). If no change, select not applicable (NA)

28. My sense of cynicism in life.
28.a. Prior to Class Afloat -- Please scale from low (1) to high (6). If no change, select not applicable (NA)
28.b. Today -- Please scale from low (1) to high (6). If no change, select not applicable (NA)
28.c. How important was the Class Afloat experience to this change? -- Please scale from low (1) to high (6). If no change, select not applicable (NA)

29. The extent of my self-knowledge.
29.a. Prior to Class Afloat -- Please scale from low (1) to high (6). If no change, select not applicable (NA)
29.b. Today -- Please scale from low (1) to high (6). If no change, select not applicable (NA)
29.c. How important was the Class Afloat experience to this change? -- Please scale from low (1) to high (6). If no change, select not applicable (NA)

30. My ability to make wise decisions.
30.a. Prior to Class Afloat -- Please scale from low (1) to high (6). If no change, select not applicable (NA)
30.b. Today -- Please scale from low (1) to high (6). If no change, select not applicable (NA)
30.c. How important was the Class Afloat experience to this change? -- Please scale from low (1) to high (6). If no change, select not applicable (NA)

31. My ability to embrace life experiences.\
31.a. Prior to Class Afloat -- Please scale from low (1) to high (6). If no change, select not applicable (NA)
31.b. Today -- Please scale from low (1) to high (6). If no change, select not applicable (NA)
31.c. How important was the Class Afloat experience to this change? -- Please scale from low (1) to high (6). If no change, select not applicable (NA)

32. My ability to reflect on life experiences.
32.a. Prior to Class Afloat -- Please scale from low (1) to high (6). If no change, select not applicable (NA)

32.b. Today -- Please scale from low (1) to high (6). If no change, select not applicable (NA)
32.c. How important was the Class Afloat experience to this change? -- Please scale from low (1) to high (6). If no change, select not applicable (NA)

33. My confidence developing healthy habits in my life.
33.a. Prior to Class Afloat -- Please scale from low (1) to high (6). If no change, select not applicable (NA)
33.b. Today -- Please scale from low (1) to high (6). If no change, select not applicable (NA)
33.c. How important was the Class Afloat experience to this change? -- Please scale from low (1) to high (6). If no change, select not applicable (NA)

34. My ability to *identify* a way of life that I consider worth living.
34.a. Prior to Class Afloat -- Please scale from low (1) to high (6). If no change, select not applicable (NA)
34.b. Today -- Please scale from low (1) to high (6). If no change, select not applicable (NA)
34.c. How important was the Class Afloat experience to this change? -- Please scale from low (1) to high (6). If no change, select not applicable (NA)

35. My ability to *pursue* a way of life I consider worth living.
35.a. Prior to Class Afloat -- Please scale from low (1) to high (6). If no change, select not applicable (NA)
35.b. Today -- Please scale from low (1) to high (6). If no change, select not applicable (NA)
35.c. How important was the Class Afloat experience to this change? -- Please scale from low (1) to high (6). If no change, select not applicable (NA)

36. How has this survey been useful or sparked interest from you?
36.a. Prior to Class Afloat -- Please scale from low (1) to high (6). If no change, select not applicable (NA)
36.b. Today -- Please scale from low (1) to high (6). If no change, select not applicable (NA)
36.c. How important was the Class Afloat experience to this change? -- Please scale from low (1) to high (6). If no change, select not applicable (NA)

Section 8: Are you willing to be interviewed?

37. Given the opportunity I am interested in participating in this research as an interviewee.
Yes
No
37.a. If yes, please type your full name here:
37.b. If yes, please type your email here:
37.c. If yes, please type your phone number here:

Section 9: Want to avoid more emails about this survey?

38. To help Class Afloat avoid sending you more emails about this research, please enter your email here.

Appendix C: Email sent from Class Afloat to program alumni

Dear Class Afloat Participant:

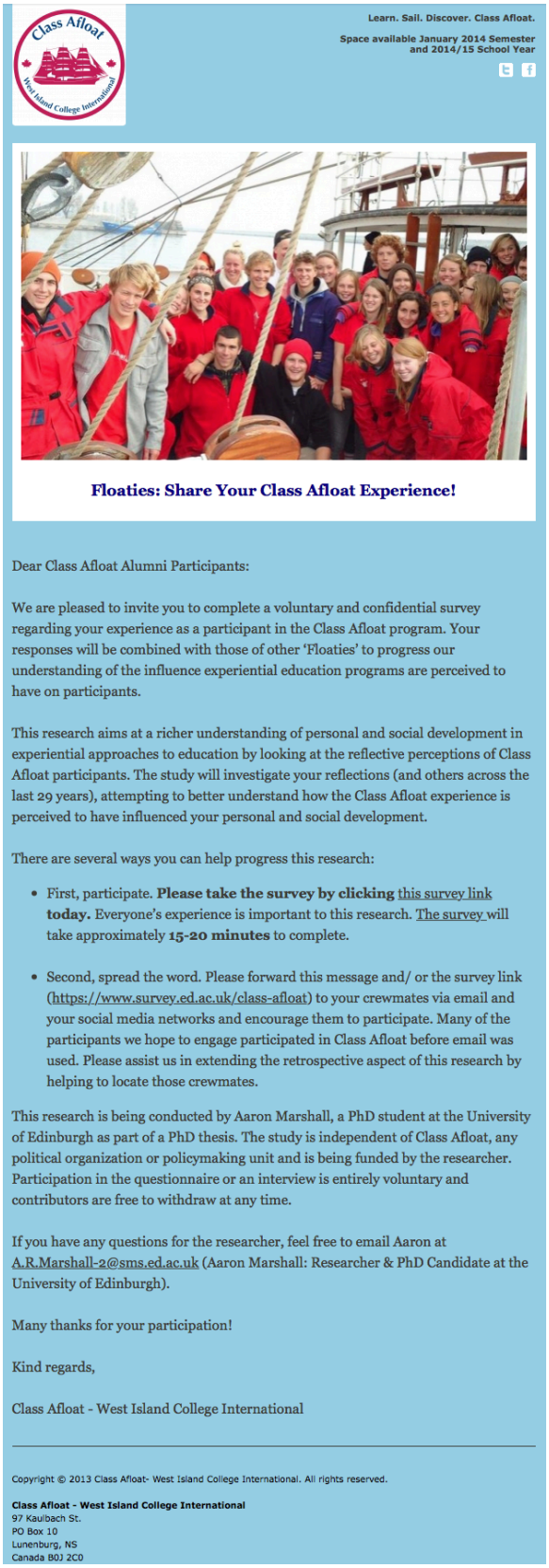
We are pleased to invite you to complete a voluntary and confidential survey regarding your experience as a participant in the Class Afloat program. Your responses will be combined with those of others to progress our understanding of the influence residential semester programs are perceived to have on participants.

This research aims at a richer understanding of personal and social development in experiential approaches to education by looking at the reflective perceptions of participants of Class Afloat's program. The study will investigate your reflections (and those of countless others across the last 25 years), attempting to better understand how the Class Afloat experience is perceived to have influenced your personal and social development.

There are several ways you can help progress this research:

- First, participate. Please take the survey by clicking the survey link today. Everyone's experience is important to this research. The survey will take approximately **15-20 minutes** to complete. (https://www.survey.ed.ac.uk/class-afloat)

- Second, spread the word. Please forward the survey link to crewmates and encourage them to participate, via your social media networks. Many of the participants we hope to engage in this research participated in Class Afloat before email was routinely collected. Please help us extend the retrospective



Learn. Sail. Discover. Class Afloat.

Space available January 2014 Semester and 2014/15 School Year

Floaties: Share Your Class Afloat Experience!

Dear Class Afloat Alumni Participants:

We are pleased to invite you to complete a voluntary and confidential survey regarding your experience as a participant in the Class Afloat program. Your responses will be combined with those of other 'Floaties' to progress our understanding of the influence experiential education programs are perceived to have on participants.

This research aims at a richer understanding of personal and social development in experiential approaches to education by looking at the reflective perceptions of Class Afloat participants. The study will investigate your reflections (and others across the last 29 years), attempting to better understand how the Class Afloat experience is perceived to have influenced your personal and social development.

There are several ways you can help progress this research:

- First, participate. **Please take the survey by clicking** this survey link **today.** Everyone's experience is important to this research. The survey will take approximately **15-20 minutes** to complete.

- Second, spread the word. Please forward this message and/ or the survey link (https://www.survey.ed.ac.uk/class-afloat) to your crewmates via email and your social media networks and encourage them to participate. Many of the participants we hope to engage participated in Class Afloat before email was used. Please assist us in extending the retrospective aspect of this research by helping to locate those crewmates.

This research is being conducted by Aaron Marshall, a PhD student at the University of Edinburgh as part of a PhD thesis. The study is independent of Class Afloat, any political organization or policymaking unit and is being funded by the researcher. Participation in the questionnaire or an interview is entirely voluntary and contributors are free to withdraw at any time.

If you have any questions for the researcher, feel free to email Aaron at A.R.Marshall-2@sms.ed.ac.uk (Aaron Marshall: Researcher & PhD Candidate at the University of Edinburgh).

Many thanks for your participation!

Kind regards,

Class Afloat - West Island College International

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Class Afloat - West Island College International
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PO Box 10
Lunenburg, NS
Canada B0J 2C0

aspect of this research by locating those crewmates.

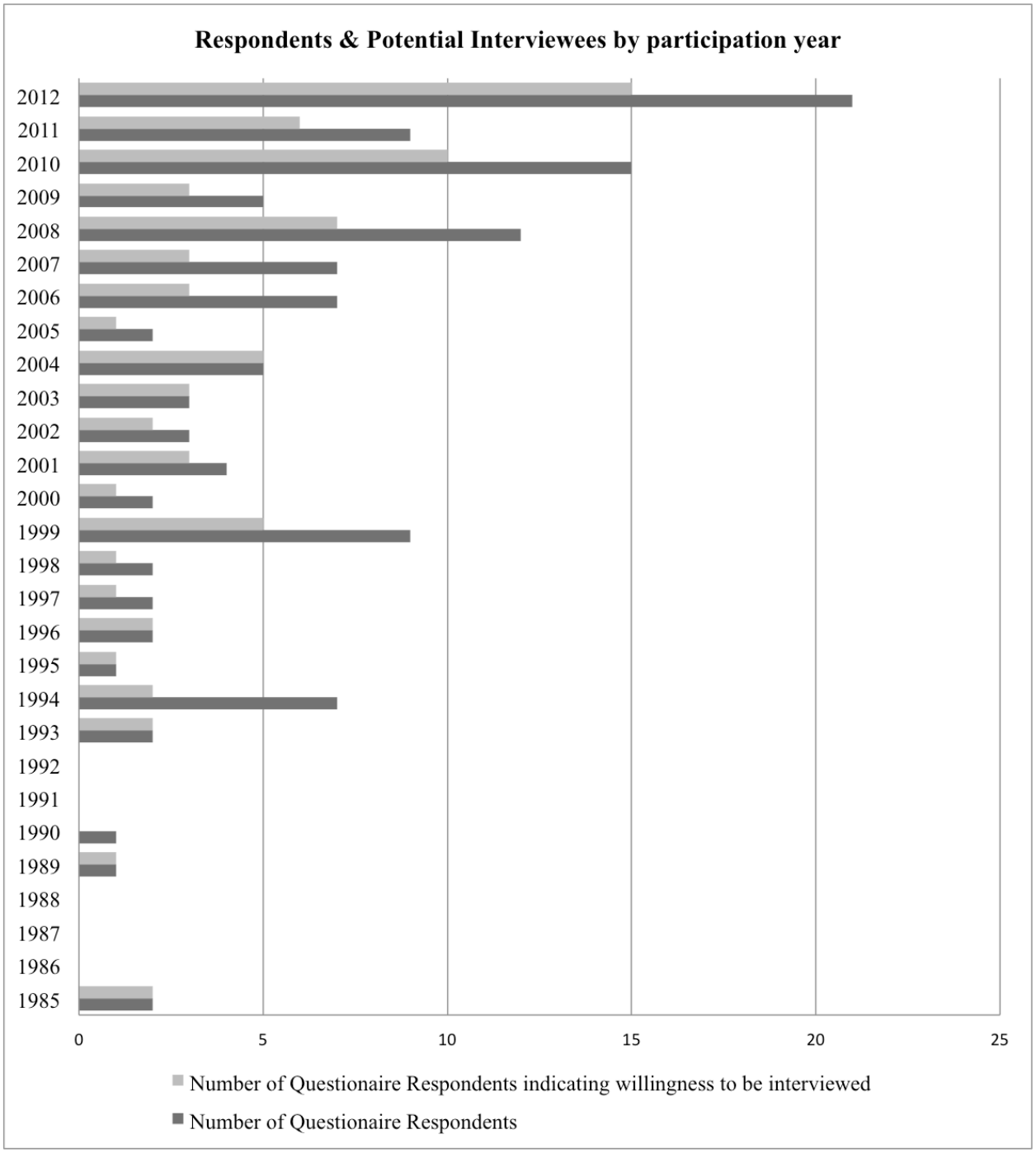
This research is being conducted by a student at the University of Edinburgh as part of a PhD thesis. The study is independent of any political organization or policymaking unit and is being funded by the researcher. Participation in the questionnaire or an interview is entirely voluntary and contributors are free to withdraw at any time.

Many thanks for your participation. If you have any questions for the researcher, feel free to email him at A.R.Marshall-2@sms.ed.ac.uk (Aaron Marshall: Researcher & PhD Candidate at the University of Edinburgh).

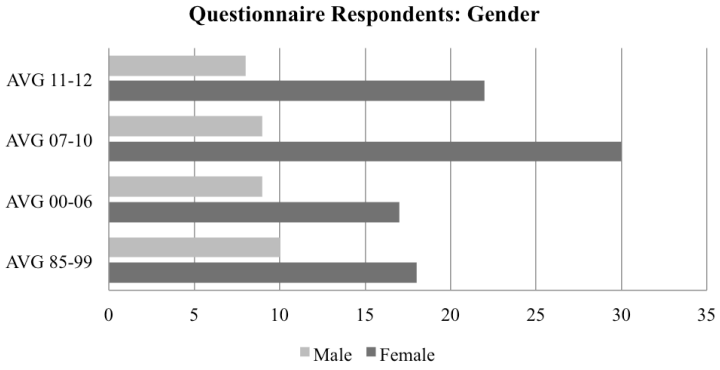
[SIGN OFF BY CLASS AFLOAT]

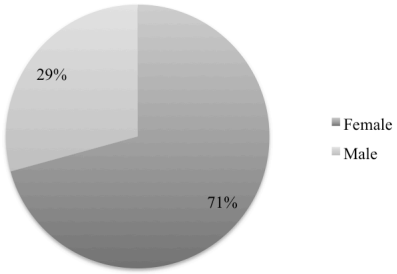
The email produced and sent by Class Afloat (image on right) is still available at the following link: http://us2.campaign-archive1.com/?u=e90fe1ffac06c0249688deb47&id=25353d41a6

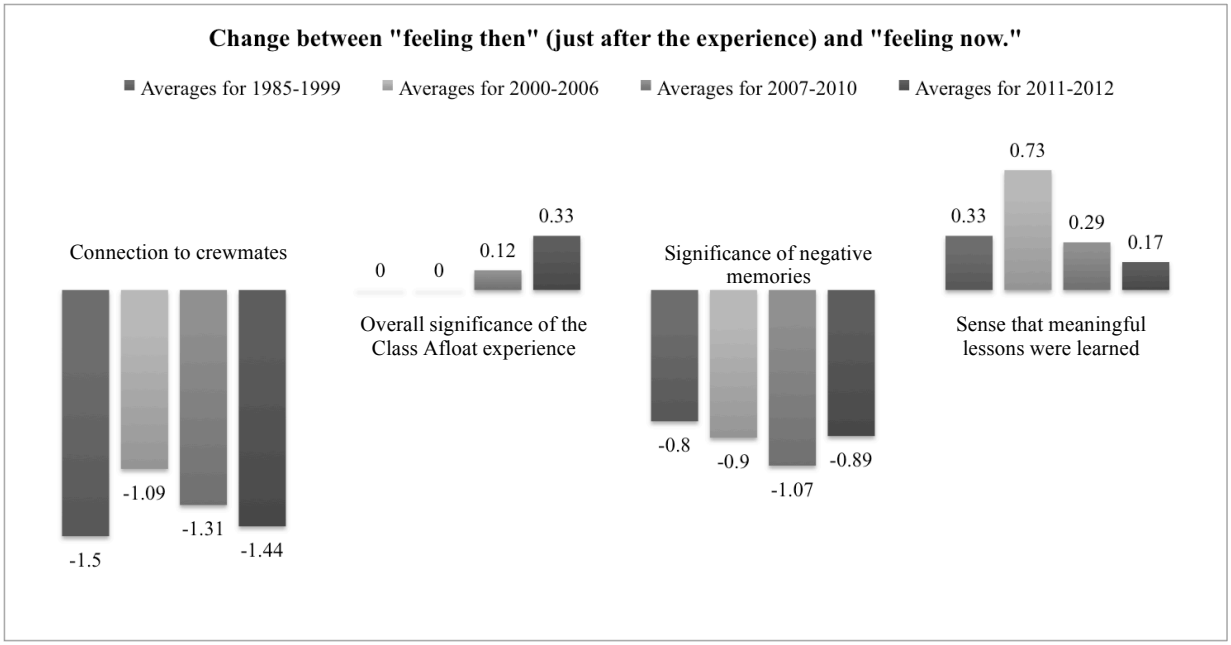
Appendix D: Questionnaire Respondents cohort breakdown

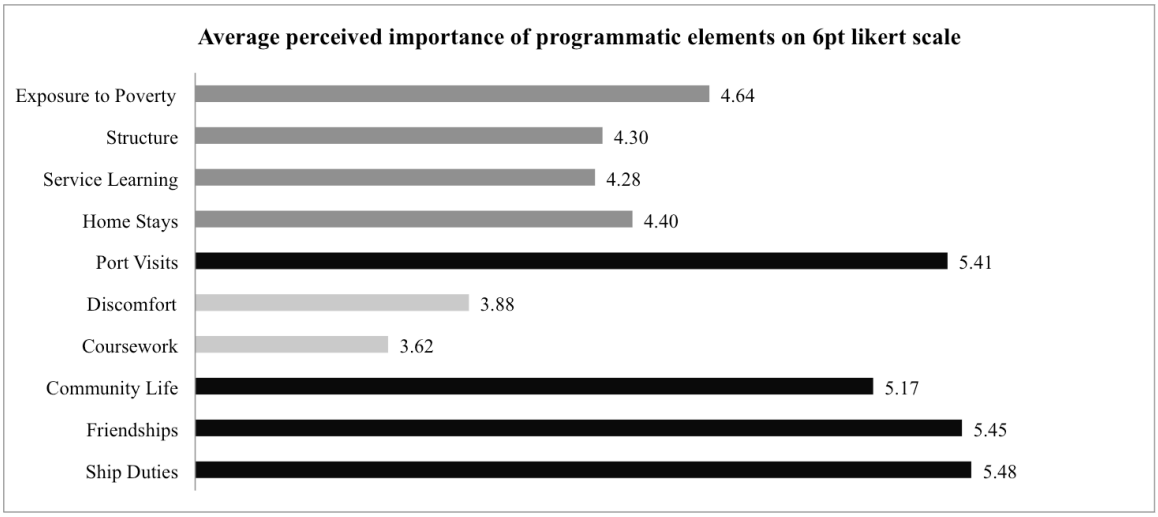


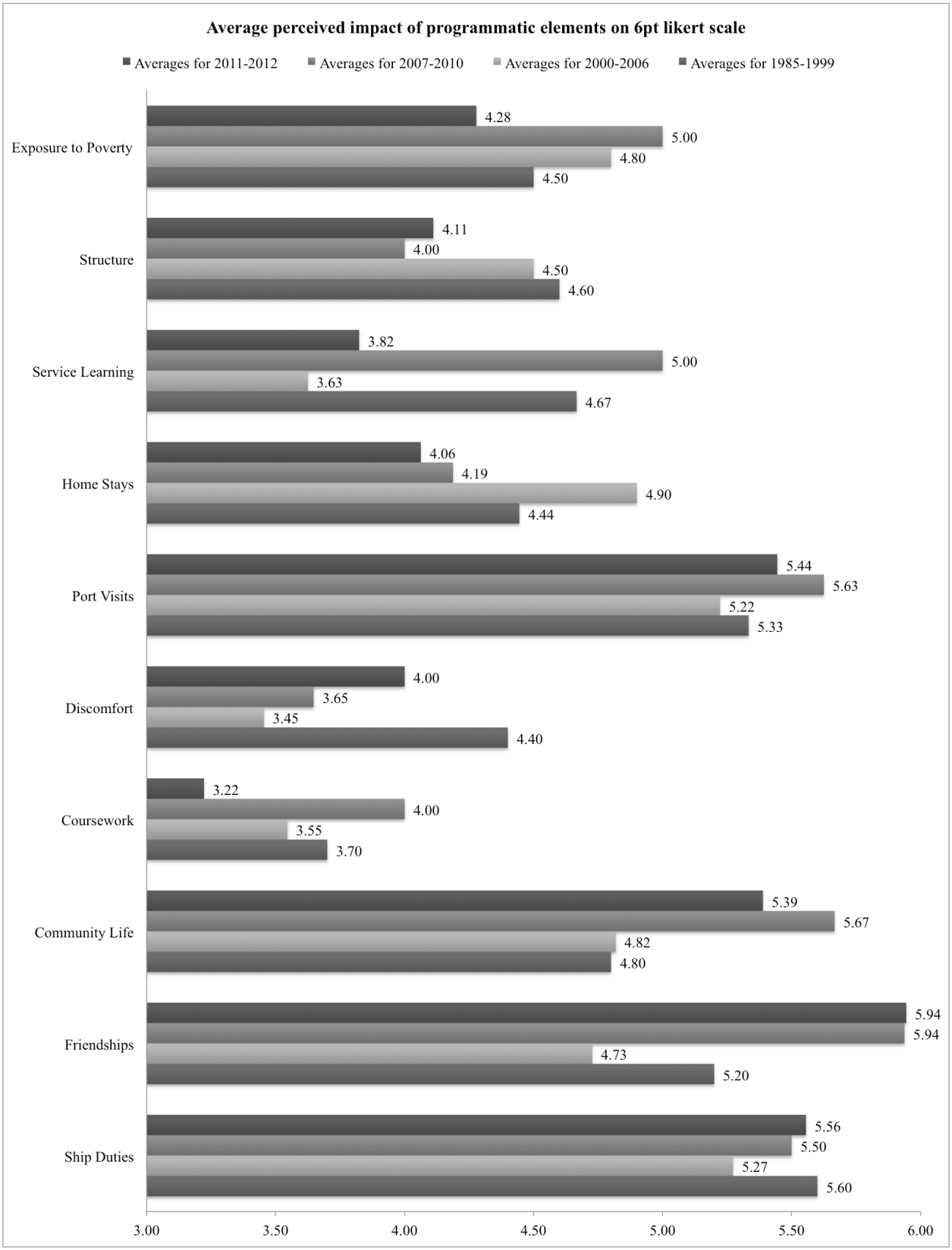
Appendix E: Questionnaire Graphs

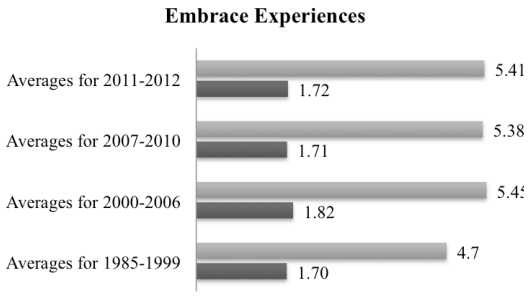


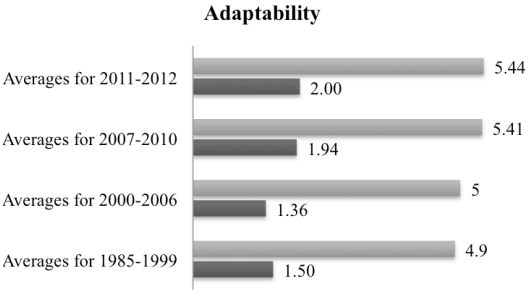


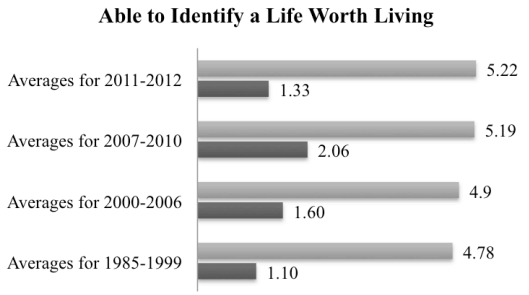


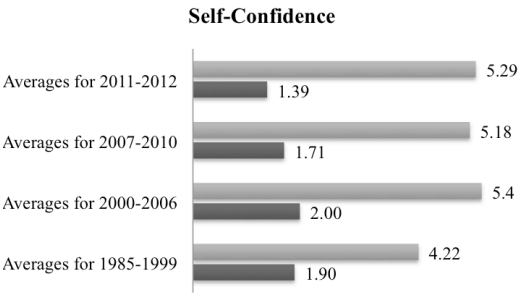

Average perceived importance of programmatic elements on 6pt likert scale
Exposure to Poverty
4.64
Structure
4.30
Service Learning
4.28
Home Stays
4.40
Port Visits
5.41
Discomfort
3.88
Coursework
3.62
Community Life
5.17
Friendships
5.45
Ship Duties
5.48


Average perceived impact of programmatic elements on 6pt likert scale
Averages for 2011-2012
Averages for 2007-2010
Averages for 2000-2006
Averages for 1985-1999
Exposure to Poverty
4.28
5.00
4.80
4.50
Structure
4.11
4.00
4.50
4.60
Service Learning
3.82
5.00
3.63
4.67
Home Stays
4.06
4.19
4.90
4.44
Port Visits
5.44
5.63
5.22
5.33
Discomfort
4.00
3.65
3.45
4.40
Coursework
3.22
4.00
3.55
3.70
Community Life
5.39
5.67
4.82
4.80
Friendships
5.94
5.94
4.73
5.20
Ship Duties
5.56
5.50
5.27
5.60
3.00
3.50
4.00
4.50
5.00
5.50
6.00

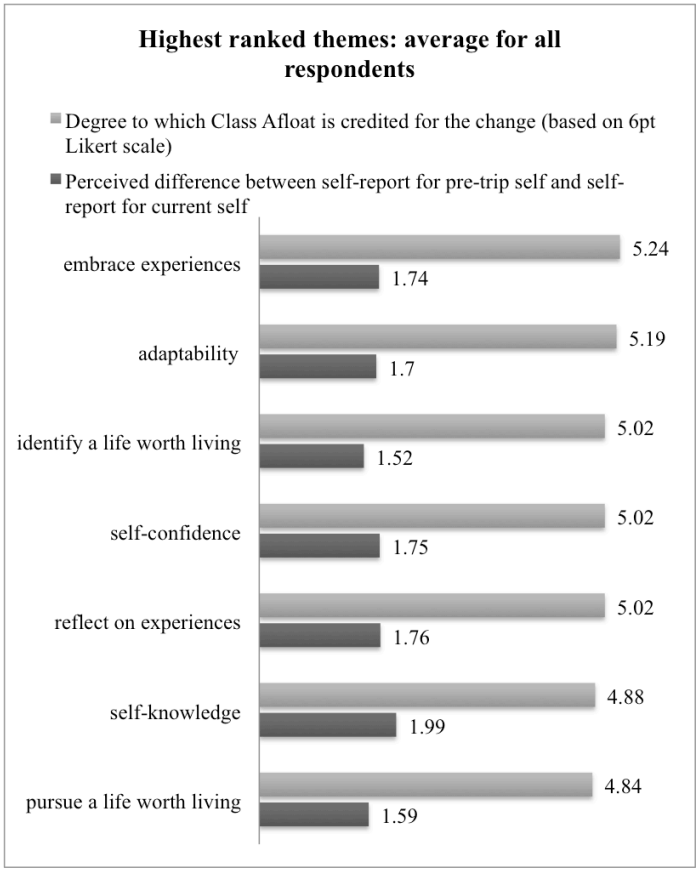

Embrace Experiences
Averages for 2011-2012
5.41
1.72
Averages for 2007-2010
5.38
1.71
Averages for 2000-2006
5.4
1.82
Averages for 1985-1999
4.7
1.70

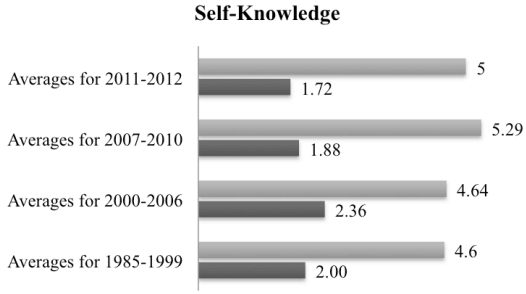

Adaptability
Averages for 2011-2012
5.44
2.00
Averages for 2007-2010
5.41
1.94
Averages for 2000-2006
5
1.36
Averages for 1985-1999
4.9
1.50

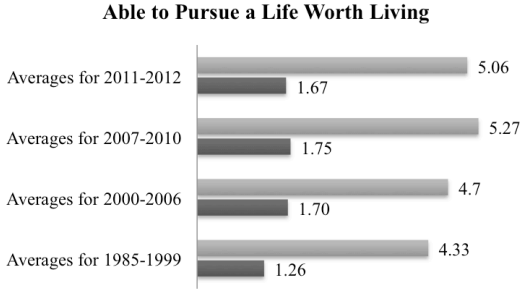

Able to Identify a Life Worth Living
Averages for 2011-2012
5.22
1.33
Averages for 2007-2010
5.19
2.06
Averages for 2000-2006
4.9
1.60
Averages for 1985-1999
4.78
1.10


Self-Confidence
Averages for 2011-2012
5.29
1.39
Averages for 2007-2010
5.18
1.71
Averages for 2000-2006
5.4
2.00
Averages for 1985-1999
4.22
1.90

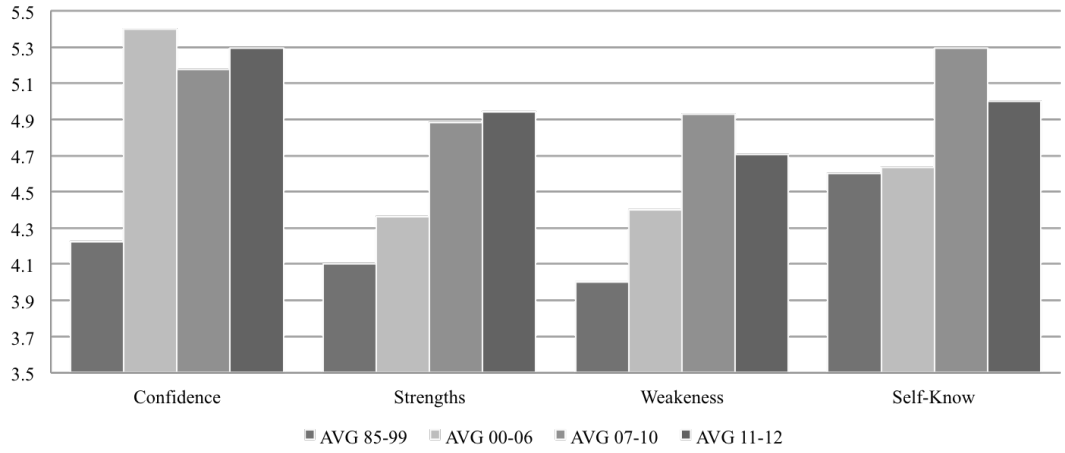

Reflect on Experiences
Averages for 2011-2012
5.11
1.83
Averages for 2007-2010
5.18
1.59
Averages for 2000-2006
5
1.82
Averages for 1985-1999
4.78
1.80


Highest ranked themes: average for all respondents
Degree to which Class Afloat is credited for the change (based on 6pt Likert scale)
Perceived difference between self-report for pre-trip self and self-report for current self
embrace experiences
5.24
1.74
adaptability
5.19
1.7
identify a life worth living
5.02
1.52
self-confidence
5.02
1.75
reflect on experiences
5.02
1.76
self-knowledge
4.88
1.99
pursue a life worth living
4.84
1.59


Self-Knowledge
Averages for 2011-2012
5
1.72
Averages for 2007-2010
5.29
1.88
Averages for 2000-2006
4.64
2.36
Averages for 1985-1999
4.6
2.00

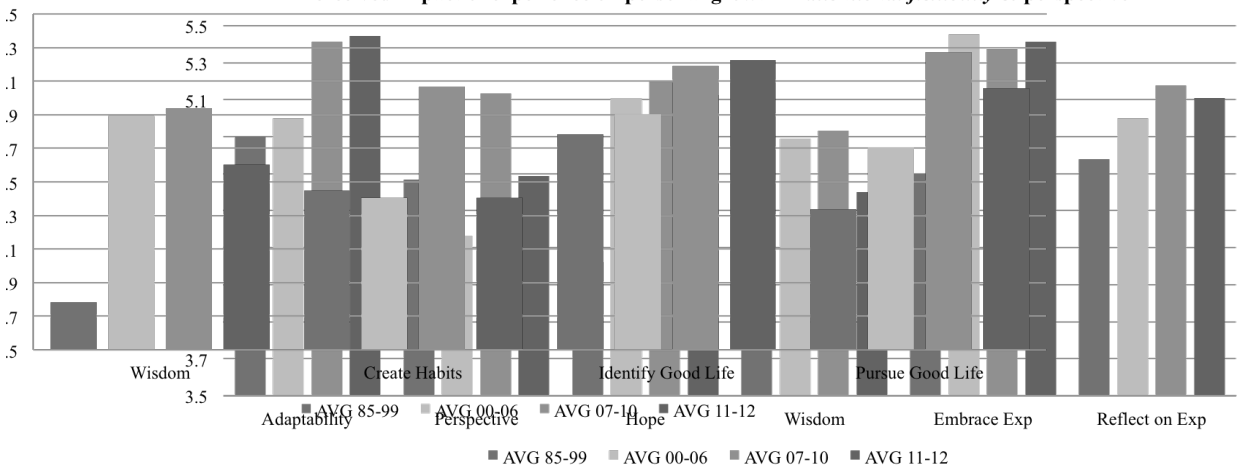

Able to Pursue a Life Worth Living
Averages for 2011-2012
5.06
1.67
Averages for 2007-2010
5.27
1.75
Averages for 2000-2006
4.7
1.70
Averages for 1985-1999
4.33
1.26

Perceived impact of experience on personal growth in self-awareness



Perceived impact of experience on personal growth in practical wisdom

Perceived impact of experience on personal growth in *attentional flexibility* & perspective



Appendix F: Sampling Considerations

Research Aim:
Understand participant retrospective perceptions of their residential education experience aboard Class Afloat.

Criteria Considerations:

- Retrospection 2-29 years back
- Potential areas of comparison – between length of retrospection, between genders, between length of participation, between majority and minority perspectives.

Ideal Sample would include:

- 2-4 interview respondents from 5 time periods: 2-5yrs, 6-10yrs, 11-15yrs, 16-20yrs, and 21-29yrs of reflection.
- Interviews from male and female participants in each group
- Interviews with minority perspectives
- Interviews of both semester and full year participants

Sample size:

- Primary question: What sample size will reach saturation or redundancy?
- Seeking a range of 10-20, anticipating saturation between 10 and 15 (or 2-3 respondents/time period).
- Acceptability based on
    - Approach: phenomenological (10)
    - Data Collection Method: in-depth interviews (30)
    - Length of Interviews: 45-90 minutes (10-20)

Potential respondents Matrix:

		gender			length of participation			Unique Responses		
		male	female	Total	sem	2sem	3+	no change	no rec	not enj/me
	totals	**25**	**54**	**79**	**14**	**59**	**6**	**2**	**3**	**7**
21-29yr refl	1985-1993	3	2	5	1	4	0	0	0	0
16-20yr refl	1994-1998	1	6	7	0	7	0	0	0	1
11-15yr refl	1999-2003	5	9	14	6	6	2	1	1	1
6-10yr refl	2004-2008	5	14	19	4	15	0	0	0	2
2-	2009-	11	23	34	3	27	4	1	2	3

5yr refl	2012		

Sampling Plan:

- Invite 2-4 respondents from each time period to interview with the broadest gender and semester length variety possibly (per time period). Initial invitation to 2 with additional invites as needed to reach saturation.
- Invite 4 minority perspective respondents to interview in addition to the above interviews (minority respondents are representative in 4 of the 5 time periods – there are 11 unique respondents represented).
- Initial interview sample would reach 14 with possible expansion to 26.

Thoughts:

I'm not sure how to label this sampling approach. I am trying to match what I have read in terms of norms while accounting for anticipated saturation and potential comparisons. I think this looks most like a purposive sample with some quota sampling criteria. I also looked at several other criteria available from the survey data, but no other comparisons looked significant enough to pursue. For instance, I charted how frequently survey respondents reported thinking about their CA experience, and the spread was slightly heavier for the most recent trip participants, but the spread was still fairly even between daily, weekly, and monthly. All of these seemed quite frequent and did not suggest good reason to pursue as part of the respondent matrix.

Appendix G: Sampling Rationale

A stepwise sampling procedure was utilized for this study. First, all past participants of the Class Afloat program were invited, via email, to participate in an online questionnaire. There were 124 survey respondents.

At the end of the questionnaire, participants were asked whether or not they were willing to participate in a related interview. From the 124 survey respondents, 79 were willing to participate in an interview. These 79 potential interview respondents included a 2:1 female to male ratio, and approximately a 1:4 semester to year ratio for length of program participation. 11 unique respondents were identified as deviant – either indicating the experience caused "no change" in them (2 of 79), they would "not recommend the program" to others (3 of 79), or selected something other than the experience was "enjoyable and meaningful" (7 of 79). A purposive sample was used to secure interview respondents that include an equitable balance of males and females, an equitable comparison of varying participation lengths, and an opportunity to surface the views of deviant cases.

To ensure a retrospective spread of respondents, the potential respondents were grouped into 5 time periods:

- 5 years of reflection or less – 34 potential respondents
- 6-10 years of reflection – 19 potential respondents
- 11-15 years of reflection – 14 potential respondents
- 16-20 years of reflection – 7 potential respondents
- 21 or more years of reflection – 5 potential respondents

Each of these groupings offered potential participants of both genders. Four of the 5 groupings included semester and year participants, and at least one deviant case.

An initial round of pilot interviews was conducted with respondents from the pilot survey – past participants of a similar residential experiential program, Semester at Sea. These interviews led to significant changes in the proposed interview protocol – including transition from two follow-up interviews to a single extended interview.

Following the sample criteria, a second round of pilot interviews was conducted with potential participants using the new interview protocol. These respondents were drawn largely from the first group (5 years of reflection or less) because of the abundance of potential respondents available. After these additional pilot interviews, the interview protocol was minimally refined.

Following the sample criteria, 2 potential respondents from each time grouping were contacted (by email or phone call) and invited to interview. Where potential respondents were unavailable, additional potential respondents were contacted.

Appendix H: Pilot Interview Protocol

First Interview Protocol (45-60 minutes)

Opening Script Highlights (3-5 min) – ***put into an information sheet they can read ahead of time (1 page)***

- Share about the study
- Explain informed consent (recorded agreement via Skype)
- Discuss confidentiality
- Introductory Information – brief review of questionnaire

Questions and Prompts (30-40 min)

1. Tell me about your introduction to Class Afloat. (Before you get on board)
   - Anticipation
   - Expectations
   - Maturity
   - Adventure
   - Perspective

2. Tell me about how you remember your semester with Class Afloat.
   - Fit with expectations
   - Challenges
   - Changes
   - Successes

3. Tell me about how your semester with Class Afloat fit with your life story up to that point. ***(How do you help people narrow the fluff that comes from story answers. Think about asking something like – "Describe what you were like before you went on that journey" – you want a picture of what they were like before they went on the trip, and how that experience fit with previous experience.) – How would friends or parents have described you at that point?***
   - Behaviors/Habits
   - Maturity
   - Adventure
   - Perspective
   - Friendships
   - Values

4. Tell me about how your semester with Class Afloat fits into the larger story of your life today.
   - Relative Weight (beside other experiences)
   - Maturity
   - Values
   - Perspective

Closing Script (3-5 min)

- Provide my contact information
- Set expectations for a second interview – to clarify, discuss reflections, and discuss insights
- Thank for time.

Who have you spoken to/what data does not support your cases?

What themes and patterns do we want to look for that might enhance the research questions?

Second Interview Protocol (30 minutes)

Opening Script Highlights (2-3 min)

- Small Talk

Questions and Prompts (20-25 min)

1. Tell me about your insights regarding Class Afloat since our last conversation.
   -

Brief discussion of the study and emerging themes (TBD by 1st interviews)

2. Tell me about how these themes resonate with you own life story since your Class Afloat experience.
   - Theme 1
   - Theme 2
   - Theme 3 ??

Closing Script (3-5 min)

- Solicit questions
- Set expectations for member checking
- *Perhaps add a final reflective journal prompt?? (solicited via email)*
- Thank for time.

*****Time Lapse – what's the ideal and why? How long is too long? Literature grounded answer – window of opportunity***

Appendix I: Sample Notes from a Pilot Interview

1. *Tell me about your introduction to Semester at Sea.*
    a. Describe your mindset heading into the experience.
        i. Brother passed away the summer before. Read CSLewis quote about losing his mother (to me).
        ii. Went to school, then lost father during first semester at school '99. College was a brutal time. Feeling pretty numb. Life lost purpose.
        iii. Needed to try something new to try and fix self. Ready to get beyond South Dakota and see the world
        iv. SAS was an opportunity to experience something new, seeking.
        v. SAS came at a good time – seeing through other people's eyes – perspective on the blessings we have in life.
        vi. SAS changed me. Compared to mission type trips, it was me focused rather than other focused.
        vii. Expectations – that it would shake me up. Looking to not be numb. Wanting growth. Lots of connections to faith – God's care for me.
    b. Describe what you were like before you went on that journey?
        i. Limited perspective, painful season,
        ii. Strong faith values, out of comfort zone on experience
        iii. 19 year old Laura,
            1. Tame, conservative, rural south Dakota
            2. Party lines of Christina reformed church, without a challenged faith
            3. Sport, camping – comfortable, stagnant in terms of growth
        iv. Seeking a place to grow – SAS became that place
        v. What would friends or teachers add – that I was outgoing, vivacious, and gregarious; loss caused me to pull back from everything. SAS forced me out that pattern.
2. *Talk about how you remember your semester*
    a. Significant aspects
        i. Bombing of the uss cole, piracy concerns
        ii. Boat was rerouted – missed out on pyramids, but got to see South Africa and Nelson Mandela, and also got to hear Fidel Castro.
        iii. Field directed practicum – lots that were music oriented
        iv. In Asia, I set foot in pagotas, mosques, temples, etc. for the first time. Ganges River.
        v. Egypt
        vi. Robbed in Russia
    b. Skills
        i. Some interesting classes – music and business

ii. Confidence to interact with people that are different – that I am not familiar with. My graduating class was 11 students.
iii. Confidence in being an adult, traveling well, and also when to be wise about living in community
iv. Conflicted personality – drawn to people coupled with the risk of loss and pain; this experience helped that part of me grow – learning that it's worth it to invest in people.

c. Challenges
   i. Week on the boat right off the bat – get to know folks, lots of good conversations, struggling with faith – didn't want to have much to do with God at that point. Atheist roommate. Debates about religious stuff. Liberal faculty relative to upbringing.
   ii. Difficult to keep putting self out there
d. Changes – built lasting deep friendships in spite of significant differences in values and personality
e. Successes – willingness to challenge self and travel well, overcome language barriers; stepping into the unknown and growing through it.

3. *How does SAS fit into the larger story of your life today?*
   -Quoted St. Augustine – the world is a book and those who don't travel have only read a page
   -Regained childlike wonder – made me hungry to grasp wonder again with experiences in new places – to look at the world with fresh eyes.
   -SAS was the catalyst for seeing more of the world, meet more of the world's people, and broaden my relational set. It's more fun to face life with diversity.
   a. Compare to other experiences – notes from beginning regarding Discovery trips and comparison to mission; may take a trip with mom; has traveled a lot by herself or with friends.
   b. Maturity -
   c. Values – diversity; spirit of adventure was regained; optimism; vulnerability in relationships
   d. Perspective – sense of confidence/freedom to be an individual; that the world is big
4. *Where does it rank as a shaping experience – one that made me who I am*
   a. Shaped my love of travel – impacts choices and how I spend my time
   b. Willingness to approach people I don't know
   c. Greater confidence talking with strangers/students I don't know (accelerated)
   d. Has changed me.

Appendix J: Email follow-up for Interview Prospects

Hello,

Thanks so much for participating in my Class Afloat survey last December.

I am proceeding with interviews to develop some of the data that surfaced from the survey, and I would love to interview you. I have your email because you suggested you would be willing to participate further - for this I am grateful.

I would like to schedule interviews during the next few weeks, and optimistically, I hope to complete all interviews during the month of July.

1 Please read the attached document outlining the study, informed consent, confidentiality, a review of the survey, and things to reflect on before the interview.
2 Please email me several dates/times that would work for you to interview via Skype for approximately 60 minutes.
3 Please email me your Skpe username (mine is aaron.r.marshall). If you do not have a free Skype account and would prefer to not start one, please let me know and we can arrange an alternative.

These interviews are crucial to the study, and I am incredibly appreciative of your willing participation. Thank you!

Kind Regards,

Aaron Marshall

Appendix K: Interview Information Sheet

This document was sent to potential respondents as an attachment to the email follow-up for interview prospects.

Interview Information Sheet
This document is intended to inform and prepare potential interviewees. Please take a moment to review. Many thanks for your investment in this project. I could not continue the research without your support and participation.

About the Study, Informed Consent, & Confidentiality
These interviews are part of a larger study investigating the influence residential semester programs are perceived to have on participants.

This research aims at a richer understanding of personal and social development in experiential approaches to education by looking at the reflective perceptions of participants in a particular, experiential, residential, semester program (Class Afloat). The study investigates the reflections of participants across 29 years (1985-2012). I seek to understand how the experience is perceived to influence personal and social development in participants. This research is part of my PhD thesis as a student at the Moray House of Education, University of Edinburgh. The study is independent of any political organization or policymaking unit and is being funded by the researcher. Participation in an interview is entirely voluntary and contributors are free to withdraw at any time.

The research project follows the revised ethical guidelines of the British Educational Research Association (BERA) which stipulates researchers respect their participants through a range of responsibilities including:

- *A voluntary informed consent, to be confirmed by interviewee and interviewer verbally at the start of the interview.*
- The option for participants to keep their contributions anonymous.
- The option for participants not to be directly quoted.
- The option for participants not to have any material or information attributed to them.
- Information taken from the interview to be treated in the strictest of confidence.
- Information to be securely stored in a digital format, using password protected files.

The research will contribute to the understanding of perceived value gained through experiential, residential semester programming over time. Understanding how the experience is perceived at varying lengths of time from the experience will shed light on the long term perceived effects of such programs, and will inform program development aimed at increased personal and social development in participants. The research will form part of PhD study resulting in a written thesis and peer reviewed journal articles.

If you have any questions before, during or after the interview please feel free to email me - Aaron Marshall at A.R.Marshall-2@sms.ed.ac.uk

About the Survey

Pilot interviews revealed that participants would be best served by an opportunity to review the survey questions prior to interviewing. Beyond demographic requests, the survey you participated in last November/December included questions about the following:

- Your overall impression of your Class Afloat experience
- How frequently you think about your Class Afloat experience
- What components of the experience were most memorable
- Would you say the experience caused a change in you? How so?
- How significant were the various programmatic elements to your experience – ship duties, cultivation of friendships, community life, coursework, discomfort, port visits, home stays, service learning, structure, and exposure to poverty.
- How many of your crewmates do you stay in touch with?
- How frequently do you have personal contact with them? (visit, phone or in person conversation)
- How frequently do you maintain impersonal contact with them? (email, messaging, social media)
- Would you recommend the Class Afloat program to others?
- Reflect on how you felt just after the Class Afloat program and compare it to how you feel now in terms of connectedness to crewmates, overall significance of the program, and memories.
- As an exercise in reflection, consider how you were before class afloat compared to today in terms of the following, and note how important Class Afloat was to any change.
    - Confidence in your own abilities
    - Ability to adapt to shifting circumstances
    - Ability to face life's circumstances with healthy perspective
    - Ability to accurately assess your own strengths
    - Ability to accurately assess your own weaknesses
    - Sense of hope, optimism, realism, pessimism, and cynicism
    - Extent of own self-knowledge
    - Ability to make wise decisions
    - Ability to embrace life experiences
    - Ability to reflect on life experiences
    - Confidence developing healthy habits in your life
    - Ability to identify a way of life you consider worth living
    - Ability to pursue a way of life you consider worth living

Pre-Interview Reflections

- Think about the kind of person you were before the trip – what motivated you, what did you value, what kind of life were you looking forward to having, what were your hopes/dreams, what challenges were you facing?
- Think about your Class Afloat experience – what were the highs and lows, what were the important take-aways, do any memories that stand out from the rest, how did the experience influence the kind of person you were when you started?
- Think about the kind of person you are today – what motivates you now, what do you value, what kind of life are you looking forward to, what are your hopes/dreams, what challenges are you facing?
- Think about experiences in your life that have significantly influenced the kind of person you are.

Kind Regards,

Aaron Marshall
Researcher, PhD Candidate, University of Edinburgh

Appendix L: Finalized Interview Protocol

Opening Script Highlights (3-5 min)

- Share about the study
- Explain informed consent (recorded agreement via Skype)
- Discuss confidentiality
- Introductory Information – brief review of questionnaire

Email prompts for reflection (sent prior to scheduled interview)

- Reflect on the kind of person you were before the trip.
- Reflect on your Class Afloat experience.
- Reflect on the kind of person you are today.
- Reflect on the kind of person you would like to become.

Questions and Prompts

1. How would you describe yourself prior to your Class Afloat experience?
2. Tell me about your mindset heading into your Class Afloat experience.

   On the questionnaire you noted that the experience changed you.

3. Tell me about the most memorable parts of your Class Afloat experience.
4. How would you say the experience fits within the larger story of your life today?
5. When you reflect on the experience:
   a. What role has it played in your life?
   b. How does it compare to other significant experiences?
   c. In what ways are you a different person now because of that experience?
6. When you think about the person you have become in life,
   a. How would you say Class Afloat has shaped you?
   b. Would you credit Class Afloat with catalyzing particular traits or habits in you?
7. Imagine you never attended Class Afloat. In what ways would you be a different person today having not attended?
8. Could you tell me more about the role _____ has played in understanding how this experience has shaped you?

9. Others have shared mentioned the significance of _____ in both their Class Afloat experience and in shaping their life since. How do these themes resonate with you?

Thank you so much for sharing your story with me. It has been incredibly helpful.

Appendix M: Interviewer Notes Regarding Emerging Themes

This sheet accompanied the interviewer and note-taking to remind interviewer of central themes that ought to be addressed in the course of the story. Themes that were not addressed by the natural course of story response were solicited through interview questions 8 and 9.

Sail Training Outcomes

- Learning and Achievement: including progressive mastery of new skills and/or discipline-based content, confidence
- Positive Behaviors: concerned with virtue and character, practical wisdom (judgment), respect for self and others, teamwork, leadership
- Connections and Relationships: between people – peers and adults; between the sailing experience and other experiences – past, present and future
- Productivity: participating, taking action to contribute to individual and group goals
- Self-Sufficiency: to be self-reliant and appropriately confident, self aware

Potential Virtue Themes

- Preconditions for virtue: Desire, Deliberation, Decision, and Voluntary action
- Mentorship
    - role of phronimos
    - tie to friendship/connection with adults
- Reflective virtues (intellectual)
    - attentional flexibility
    - perspective
    - moderate self-awareness
    - realistic optimism
- Moral virtues
    - courage (inspired confidence and hope in the face of fear, standing firm against it)
    - temperance (having desires and reason aim at the right things in the right ways at the right times)
    - prudence (phronesis, practical wisdom)
    - justice (desiring and exercising virtue in relation to another)

    - friendship: a)treating others decently (with or without fondness - neither pleaser nor quarreler); b) virtue friendship (loving the other, pursuing shared passions, spurring one another on toward virtue)

- wit (proper or discriminate humor - appropriate joking, avoiding shaming or embarrassment while engaging laughter)
- generosity (acquiring and giving money in the right ways at the right times)
- humility (a right understanding of one's self - covers Aristotle's magnanimity, the virtue concerned with small honors, and truthfulness)
- mildness (being angry with the right things in the right way at the right time - patience or kindness overlap later views)

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